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ABSTRACT

American youth service history gives some clues to the barriers the nation faces in creating a comprehensive and effective system for youth at risk. Barriers to effective youth service grow out of this history and in part contribute to it. The engine that has driven youth services--and the misperceptions that drive those services--is the theory of youth deviance. This theory infects the media, which spreads the infection back to the public, policymakers, and youth service community. Although the media publicize the current youth crisis, youth service remains invisible to much of the public. The most pernicious effect of the deviancy theory and publicity is the specialization of the youth service and its balkanization into autonomous fiefdoms. The ramshackle funding for youth service work leads to two kinds of funding problems. Overly specialized funding makes delivery of comprehensive services all but impossible. Short-term funding leads to instability. Youth service agencies are not well served by competent, experienced, trained staff members. Staff problems afflict both the agencies and organizations that provide funds and those that provide services. An ideal youth service system can be imagined and developed. Positive models at home and abroad could be adapted to the needs of American youth. (Commentaries by Dorothy Stoneman and David W. Richart are appended.) (YLB)

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Barriers

to

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Youth and America's Future:

The William T. Grant Foundation
Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship



YOUTH AND AMERICA'S FUTURE:

THE WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION COMMISSION ON WORK, FAMILY AND CITIZENSHIP

When William Thomas Grant established the Grant Foundation in 1936, he sought a better understanding of the ways in which individuals adapt to the vicissitudes of life. Touched in his professional life by the importance of caring human relationships, Mr. Grant wished to "help children develop what is in them" so they would better "enjoy all the good things the world has to offer them."

Fifty years later, recognizing the special needs of older adolescents in a changing society, the Foundation's Trustees established **Youth and America's Future** with much the same purpose: its charge is not to engage in new research but to evaluate current knowledge, stimulate new ideas, increase communication among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers and, thus, help our nation chart a better future for youth.

The Foundation's President, Robert J. Haggerty, M.D., has described the Commission's unique perspective:

"Against a rising chorus of legitimate concern about the many problems facing today's youth, the Foundation has initiated this Commission on Youth and America's Future to speak in a different voice. It will explore the strengths of America's young men and women, their families, and the programs and community institutions that serve them. We adopt this approach not to diminish the importance of the problems that exist, but to learn the lessons of success. The Foundation is confident that this effort to look with renewed respect at youth, where they stride as well as where they stumble, will help forge the links of understanding and mutual responsibility that make our democracy strong."

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BARRIERS TO DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE YOUTH SERVICES

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This paper was prepared for the Commission by William Treanor, executive director of the American Youth Work Center in Washington, DC.

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September 1988

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William Treanor

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BARRIERS TO DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE YOUTH SERVICES

Introduction

Significant conceptual, political, cultural, professional, and administrative barriers hinder aiding at-risk youth. These barriers are the principal causes of failure for organizations that seek to assist the roughly 25 to 30 percent of Americans who experience acute, if only temporary, problems during their teenage years. Both additional financial support for at-risk youth services and new ideas in equitable service delivery are needed.

However, an intertwining set of issues makes effective service to disconnected youth elusive. On the one hand, philosophical, political, and managerial issues distort the effort to aid youth. On the other, issues of staff recruitment and training, compensation, and working conditions make the efficient delivery of direct services problematic.

These barriers constitute a veritable Chinese Wall against which fragmented and insufficient efforts to help disconnected youth, in particular, and all youth, in general, come to grief. The American system of youth services is a maze of misperceptions about youth and youth service, totally inadequate and often misdirected funding, fragmentation and specialization among youth service providers and advocates, and mind-boggling staff problems.

The history of the rise and growth of youth service in America helps explain the system's ramshackle state. Barriers to effective youth service, in part, grow out of this history and in part contribute to it. However, an ideal youth service system can be imagined and developed. Positive models at home and abroad could be adapted to the needs of American youth, especially those at greatest risk. From an examination of the history, the barriers, and successful models, recommendations to correct the deficiencies in the delivery of services to youth can be developed.

I. A BRIEF HISTORY OF YOUTH SERVICE IN AMERICA

The federal government's role in aiding youth evolved slowly. Until the New Deal, the federal government directly touched the lives of young Americans primarily through military service. In the 1930s, the federal government began expanding its limited role into such areas as education and public health. The New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps (experiencing a grassroots revival in the 1980s) and the National Youth Administration began to forge a distinct governmental role for young people who were neither soldiers nor students. Federal efforts were bedeviled by segregation, which has continued to be an intractable and chronic problem in the slow development of the federal role in youth services. The World War II buildup to a 14 million member armed forces had as unintended victims these early youth employment and development efforts.

During the 20 years following World War II, little happened at the federal level to encourage or discourage youth programs. It was the era of Jimmy Dean, the Blackboard Jungle, and the Cross and the Switchblade.

The Birth of the Modern Youth Service

The Kennedy Administration coincided with the beginning of a demographically induced surge in what came to be called the "youth culture." Many young adults, especially the increasing number bound for college, thrilled and responded to President Kennedy's call: "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." Under the direction of Robert Kennedy and his aide David Hackett (now director of the Youth Policy Institute), the federal government began to launch a series of programs aimed particularly at the "Other America"--the cities, Appalachia, and racial minorities.

Federal financing of rudimentary youth programs coincided with two other national trends, one political, the other demographic and cultural. The 1960s saw the flowering of the civil rights movement. Black teenagers and black and white

college students marched shoulder to shoulder in countywide boycotts of local stores or for development of black teen cohesiveness to peacefully integrate schools and public facilities. This was a basic yet dramatic and, at the time, unrecognized early phase of community-based youth work.

A second energy source for program development followed with the whiter and more middle class anti-war movement. A sharp political and cultural gap opened between the government-sponsored youth programs of the War on Poverty variety and those promoted by the "counterculture." One was primarily oriented toward the black community, the other predominantly toward the white community.

This growth in political and social activism between 1967 and 1973 spawned a large, disconnected, politically alienated, college-educated young adult population in search of acceptable social roles. From Weatherman to Moonie, this baby boom population vented its energies in many directions. Probably no more than a few hundred turned their full-time attention toward the population that was 5 to 10 years their junior. This diverse cadre included members of the progressive, almost exclusively Protestant clergy, veterans of various civil rights campaigns, draft resisters and conscientious objectors, and others who had learned how to organize small programs on a shoestring in the Peace Corps, VISTA, and anti-poverty agencies. Starting in 1968, these 21-30-year-olds began to build an alternative youth service alongside the ones organized by government, traditional youth service organizations, civic groups, and churches.

This movement, like the Biblical mustard seed, started in a few fertile coffee houses in church basements and yielded, in the next 10 years, the fifth major stream in American youth work. The other streams are:

- o Church-based youth work -- Catholic Youth Organizations, B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, Young Life, etc.
- o Turn-of-the-century, uniformed British imports -- Boy Scouts, YMCA, YWCA, and similar programs.
- o Recreation based programs, such as Little League, the Police Athletic League, and outdoor adventure programs.

- o Publicly financed programs of the settlement house or War on Poverty lineage.

Until 1973, the alternative youth service movement was supported by non-bureaucratic foundations, Protestant churches, benefit concerts -- even panhandling. An odd federal grant found its way directly to a few of these emerging youth service organizations. But the main support came from the staff who typically worked long hours for minimal pay. Absent from the funding picture were United Way, Catholic or Jewish charities, large foundations, criminal justice or mental health agencies, or the consumers of the services -- including parents.

During this dynamic, creative period, hotlines, free clinics, runaway youth shelters, group homes (small and often coeducational), job cooperatives, and alternative schools sprang up. They appeared first in large cities and college towns. What little coordination existed was provided by a periodical, Vocations for Social Change, the National Free Clinic Council, and starting even before its formal incorporation in 1973, the National Youth Alternative Project, which in 1977 became the National Youth Work Alliance. During the 1973 to 1980 period, the Alliance was the key political coordination and dissemination body for this movement.

These local groups, ambivalent and even hostile toward government money, broke many traditional rules of American youth service organizations. Their non-hierarchical design signified the values of staff and youth empowerment and youth participation -- in contrast to the almost paramilitary structure found in scouting, Boys' Clubs, and many church and recreational youth groups.

In reality, however, services to youth often fell short of theory. Staff were enthusiastic but poorly trained. Decision-making and participation were as democratic as 5th century Athens. But like Athens, the process was constantly marred by coups, rule changes, ostracisms, and self-defeating decisions that often harmed the agency. Some agencies became stuck at this exhilarating but inefficient and standardless stage. By 1981, virtually all of these agencies were dead. The few survivors, such as Ozone House in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and the White Bird

Free Clinic in Eugene, Oregon, have become endangered species.

In the early years, the activities of these agencies were quite controversial. They promoted straight facts on illegal drug use, abortions, and sex; sheltering runaways (including many from psychiatric facilities and training schools); and a Summerhillian approach to education. Another feature, unique at that time, was full racial integration. Youth of all races and social classes mixed freely with a minimum of top-down supervision. Teenagers flocked to these programs. Free clinics were packed. Young people slept happily on floors at runaway shelters. Health boards, building inspectors, and the police seeking runaways or teen drug dealers often harassed and hampered the best efforts of the alternative service youth groups.

For the alternative youth service, prudent personal behavior was essential. With police and other watchdogs observing closely, each local agency's director soon realized that, while they could explore new areas and methods of service delivery and youth advocacy, they operated with virtually no margin of personal error. One publicized incident -- drug bust of a staff member or of sex between staff (average age of about 23) and clients -- could mean a sudden end. In a number of cases, it did. In Kansas, a youth agency director was arrested for growing marijuana on his farm. In Virginia, a group home director was arrested when caught having sex with a resident.

By 1975, despite the problems, alternative youth service agencies numbered around one thousand. They were determined to take a separate path from the traditional agencies and to avoid the mistakes and encumbrances which had left most of the traditional social service agencies and their funders unable to cope with the shift in style and values of young people. As events over the next 10 years amply demonstrated, the spirited effort of the alternative youth movement for a separate identity and approach to youth work would only partially succeed.

Money was the predominant factor that changed these agencies from almost

guerrilla operations to accepted service-provider fixtures in their communities. Paying the rent and upkeep on rundown former rooming houses and meeting the subsistence-level payrolls were inescapable realities. The alternative youth agency director was forced look outside of the narrow and impoverished young adult, hippie ghetto for aid. As support slowly grew from foundations and federal and state government, the autonomy of alternative agencies slowly eroded.

Agencies that survived the transition from alternative youth agency to the current and numerous multi-service, multi-site youth agencies, with 100 plus staff and a million dollars or more budget, usually share several features.

First, they are lead by a strong director. This person is often the founder or at least the survivor of the internecine strife that characterized the transition from countercultural, anti-professional, staff-oriented agency to one focused on service standards and bureaucratic and organizational stability.

Second, services and funding are diversified. Agencies that stuck with a single funding source soon arrived at the point, where, out of favor, they had no bargaining position or friends at all. Those that did diversify services also diversified funding sources. Foundations, churches, and local, state, and federal governments all played an important role, with the mix varying wildly from state to state. The agency was built slowly with a series of grants and contracts rather than receiving, for example, one giant drug abuse treatment grant from the National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA). Few small youth agencies that suddenly received a million dollar grant remain to tell the tale.

Third, many successful youth agencies latched on to the Runaway Youth Act, which has provided stable core funding for community-based youth agencies. With few exceptions, the strongest agencies with the best reputations in virtually any state have received Runaway Youth Act funds for 10 to 15 years.

Finally, the agency developed a successful "foreign policy" in its dealings with the media, politicians, and grantmakers. It managed to beat competing organizations

seeking the same youth funds without provoking united hostility from other local youth service providers.

The Carter Years

The Carter Administration years were the salad days for community-based youth service agencies. Most small agencies expanded, some enormously. Many new groups sprang up, particularly in youth employment and treatment of delinquent or drug-using youth. Hundreds of millions of dollars were spent each year on new and experimental efforts. For example, the federal Office of Juvenile Justice spent up to \$100 million each year, primarily for programs to keep young delinquents and status offenders out of state reform schools. And the Department of Labor's Office of Youth Programs funded a maze of experimental employment programs for at-risk youth. In many cases, the results for young people were gratifying. However, much of the effort was built on sand. There were three major problem areas.

First, no broadly accepted conceptual framework for youth work existed. The result was the haphazard growth of specialized direct service agencies, state coalitions, and national organizations, each symbiotically linked to its funding source, but rarely to each other. An effort to bring together all youth service agencies working with high-risk youth was led by the National Youth Work Alliance (NYWA) and its vocal newsletter, Youth Alternatives, to which 2,500 youth agencies subscribed. But the NYWA approach was too sophisticated for funding sources, which preferred specialization and were uncomfortable with an organization development approach that did not promise immediate results. By January 1981, specialized youth service groups had become firmly established and entrenched with help from federal and foundation funders. Each national group, of course, espoused a comprehensive approach to youth work but, in fact, pursued increased specialization.

However, the 1970s crusade left behind a new vocabulary (much of it, once again, imported from Britain) for the youth field. The legacy also included a cadre

of well-trained advocates and hundreds of entrenched, diversely funded, and well-managed community-based youth service agencies.

Second, many youth service workers had begun to identify themselves as having a profession rather than just an occupation. This followed the precedents set by the development of teaching and mental health work into professions in the past century. However, unlike other career specialties, youth work utterly failed to establish a beachhead in higher education and was unable to develop a recognized pre-service and in-service training capacity. The under-enrolled colleges and social work schools did not choose to develop major pre-service programs for training low-prestige youth workers (and poor prospects for alumni giving) like the programs common in British higher education. Despite a serious shortage of pre-trained workers and managers, next to nothing happened to fill the gap. However, since the Carter years were ones of growth and, by youth work standards, stable and even expansive funding, staff turnover slowed. These factors masked temporarily the problems of inadequate staff training, low wages, and volatility of funding.

Finally, the lack of public awareness and spotty support for youth programs left many specialized yet competing groups without broad public and political support necessary for continued local funding if and when federal and other non-local support for youth work declined.

The Reagan Years

The bubble burst for youth work on Inauguration Day 1981. Program financial support for at-risk youth is among the most marginal in the human services sector. Less established, and serving the least attractive clients in the human service field, youth service funding shrank by about one-third in the early 1980s. The Gramm-Latta budget act eliminated many agencies and slowed or reversed the growth of most.

Paradoxically, some service providers prospered. They had diversified their funding sources -- relying on state rather than federal funding -- and geographic

service areas. The field began to evolve from its "mom and pop" phase into new multi-site and even multi-state agencies, with hundreds of employees. Youth agencies begun in Massachusetts and Florida have led this increasingly important trend.

Over the past few years, the field recovered, but with growth limited principally because funds have been inadequate to attract and sustain qualified staff.

II. BARRIERS TO AN EFFECTIVE YOUTH SERVICE SYSTEM

American youth service history gives some clues to the barriers the nation faces in creating a comprehensive and effective system for youth at risk. The degree to which the history created the barriers or the barriers shaped the history is an enigma. Against the context of the history, however, an examination of the barriers gives some idea of what would constitute an effective system.

Although the barriers must be discussed separately, they are, in reality, an interlocking set of attitudes, behaviors, and practices that often create chaos and repetitive failure in the youth service field. However, public and professional misconceptions about youth and the youth service are contributing factors to the fragmentation and disarray of efforts aimed at providing needed services to American young people.

The Rise of Deviancy Theory

The engine that has driven youth services in America -- and the misperceptions that drive those services today -- is the theory of youth deviance. In the mid-19th century, various reformers urged the development of a separate court and corrections system for juveniles. The first juvenile court in Chicago, established in 1899, was an event as significant for disconnected youth as Horace Mann's triumph on behalf of public education 60 years before. It coincided with the recognition of an economic and social need for adolescence as a distinct life

phase, especially among the growing middle class.

The juvenile court movement provided a legal structure for the philosophical, moral, and psychological orientation toward at-risk youth that prevailed without challenge until the 1960s.

Under the influence of the Victorian church and conformist youth corrections sociologists, a conceptual framework developed for American youth that persists to this day. The early reformers and theorists advanced the idea that American youth, particularly those from low-income households, are either deviant or potentially deviant. This outlook soon became firmly entrenched in the American political and social welfare systems. For the next 40 years, Freudian psychology and other mental health disciplines created endless categories of real or imagined deviancy. For powerless, poor, and non-conforming teenagers and their families, the die was cast. The stern morality of the youth corrections sociologists, combined with the psychobabble of the mental health profession, sent "maladapted" American teenagers to juvenile reform schools or psychiatric hospitals.

The task of adults, according to this view, is to guide youth along a fairly narrow path to adulthood, and to correct and constrain all who stray. Over the past century, this view has completely permeated American work with teenagers. In practice this means, for example, that a local government would not fund a program to make youth workers available to assist teens on a broad range of needs. A program could only hope to be funded by touting its ability to combat a deviancy--for instance, drug use, vandalism, or crime. Nor would most foundations consider a proposal to instill in youth a strong sense of pride in a local community's history or cultural traditions.

Therefore, because of the public's and most of the funding community's unshaken belief in this deviancy control theory, the hypothetical proposal for youth workers to help all teenagers in a community gets rewritten. Now the workers become drug abuse counselors, and the local grant applicant pledges to the state

drug abuse agency -- currently flush with available funds -- that it will suppress illegal drug consumption by an ever-growing percentage over the three-year life of the grant. The youth workers' activities remain essentially the same counseling and guidance work, only the reporting and "evaluation" have been changed. Adults feel great, not because they are helping teenagers, but because they are doing something about the evils of drug abuse. The same applies to the culturally oriented youth program, which is rewritten as a delinquency prevention effort. Instead of emphasizing enhanced self-esteem and activities that enable young people to make a positive social contribution, the grant proposal now calls for a steady drop in truancy, vandalism, and rates of first arrest in the program service area. Now adults love it, believing they will see a decline in shoplifting and fewer broken windows at the local junior high school, plus more social conformity. The crime prevention grantmakers' bureaucratic imperatives follow the same pattern as the hypothetical drug abuse program. Youth workers do as they did before -- and the whole community prides itself in fighting crime.

Alas, after a year or two, neither drug abuse nor delinquency has declined. The town fathers get restless and state bureaucrats press for numbers. The bottom line on evaluation has become: How many teenagers are referred for drug abuse treatment or arrested for criminal infractions?

All too frequently the success of these problem-targeted projects depends on how adeptly their directors get along with local leaders and funders, not on fulfilling unrealistic goals for suppressing symptoms.

Teenagers who began to open up to the paid youth workers find their confidences are considered program information to be recorded and tabulated. The word spreads through the efficient adolescent grapevine. The most disconnected youth are the first to leave the program, or to simply stay away.

Well-motivated, but generally untrained, young adult youth workers want to relate to teenagers in a positive way. But they soon learn that their funding

source requires them to focus on the funders' priorities -- drugs, crime, or other deviant behavior. Youth workers thus become caught in the tension between two different and conflicting worlds. They consider the drawbacks of their work--paperwork, low wages, limited prospects for advancement, low prestige -- and throw in the towel. About 50% of new youth workers in community-based agencies quit their jobs within 18 months of being hired -- and that's just about when they have received enough on-the-job training to do an adequate job.

By the third year of funding, originally sound program ideas have been subverted. By now, the fifth youth worker fills the slot and deals only with clients identified by police or the schools as deviant and troublesome and referred under compulsion. The worker remains in the office, talks on the phone, and keeps funders happy, while reporting an ever growing problem but paradoxically increasing success in combatting it. This mix is designed to ensure an increase in funding by the sponsoring single-issue organization for the local program and to enhance its ability to aid the public agency in getting a larger budget for its work. Voluntary participation by youth in the program has become a distant memory. Innovation is a thing of the past.

The Front Page Problem

The deviancy theory infects the media, which efficiently spreads the infection back to the public, policymakers, and youth service community. A highly publicized incident, such as a recent slaying of a superlative student in Chicago, leads to a citywide "gang initiative." These efforts are generally for media and public relations consumption. Youth agency directors take them in stride. The Emergency Task Force on Gangs will be principally managed or mismanaged by ineffective bureaucrats and interact with the same rigid schools and courts as before. Few veteran insiders expect much to happen.

If a dynamic, results-oriented leader should get control of a high-profile initiative, conflict immediately follows and is professionally fatal to the person who

is challenging the status quo.

For example, in Los Angeles in the early 1980s, a major gang initiative was launched with considerable political and media fanfare. A professionally well-qualified and forceful director, John Flores, was appointed. Soon after the kleig lights were turned off, Flores encountered bureaucratic indifference, waffling support for an adequate budget, and bitter politicized bickering over staff appointments and job responsibilities. Critics gained the support of the Los Angeles Times, and, soon after, Flores was fired. He was replaced by a typical no-plan, no-program bureaucrat who made no demands on government or the community. The Los Angeles Times was happy, too. Meanwhile, the gang problem mushroomed. And in 1987, Michael Agopian, the gifted director of another gang-oriented program in the Los Angeles area, met a similar fate. Now, Los Angeles finds itself without a strong youth-work network to intervene in the lives of its poor black and Hispanic citizens. The recent "crackdown" on gangs by the Los Angeles Police Department costs \$125,000 per day in police overtime. With a week's worth of overtime pay, a creditable effort could be launched in some distressed Los Angeles neighborhood. The federal response has been to add a separate section on combating youth gangs to the Juvenile Justice Act.

As long as these media-driven initiatives are a make-believe shifting of boxes on organizational charts or the creation of new "coordination" layers, the bureaucracy and service provider community receives them with a yawn. To fundamentally change administrative practices or fund allocation in response to the real and alarming youth gang problem would cause extreme consternation among those satisfied with the status quo and cheers from the tiny youth advocacy movement.

The Invisible Youth Service

While the media howls after the youth crisis of the month, the youth service remains invisible to much of the public and even to some in the service provider

community itself. Rather than an acknowledged system of comprehensive, related, and prevention-oriented services, as in adolescent health care and education, the public perceives a hodgepodge of only vaguely related programs for youth in need or in trouble. Instead, the prevalent American attitude toward youth is that they need services outside the family/educational/religious mainstream only when they are involved in deviant or socially dysfunctional behavior or are in imminent danger of becoming so.

Government, other funders, and service providers themselves have often been unaware of the need to educate the public and policymakers on the inescapable need to provide a range of interrelated services to all young people, particularly to those at risk. Each area of youthful distress -- be it youth suicide, unemployment, or substance abuse -- goes it alone. Programs to address these discrete problems work in a near vacuum, seeking to put together their own small network of supporters, funders, and providers. It doesn't take long for these overly specialized groups to discover an urgent need for a national trade association/resource center, complete with a newsletter, annual conference, and regular manifestoes on the need for more of what they have to offer.

Recent examples of this proliferation are to be found in the mini-fields of missing children, independent living for 18-year-olds leaving public care, youth suicide, adolescent sex offenders, and therapeutic foster care and teen drunk drivers. In each case, not one, but two or more national groups have been spawned in the past few years. Each group attempts to crowd to the forefront of public awareness and to jump to the front of the queue in the intense competition for all important discretionary financial support.

The odd voice (the American Youth Work Center, New York's State-wide Youth Advocates, or Kentucky Youth Advocates) that tries to promote a comprehensive, non-sensational youth service is drowned out. It becomes lost in the clamor of often gripping and poignant special appeals on behalf of narrow but allegedly urgent

youth problems -- each suitable for the front page. Each problem, its proponents typically argue, threatens to destroy the very foundations of national life. The media abets this process, by baying about the current "in" youth crisis, only rarely taking a more sober and comprehensive look at the overall picture.

The Nature of the Blinders

How did Americans come to take such a narrow and dark view of the needs of its youth and the programs that aid them? Several cliches about the American experience spring to mind. The national enshrinement of self-reliance has certainly contributed immeasurably. The restricted American view of the social contract has meant that every individual can and should make it to adulthood with help only from family, school, church, and perhaps the neighbors.

Even education, probably the most-supported and best-understood service to youth, suffers from this syndrome. Often narrow school reforms, methods, and technologies are ballyhooed as the silver bullet that will save the day. If children will only work harder, do more homework, and attend school more hours and days, the system and the Republic will be saved. Never mind the differences in learning styles, backgrounds, abilities, and disabilities that children bring to school from an immense diversity of homes and communities.

Yet, compared to other vital youth needs, public education has done extremely well in garnering public and political support. In nutrition, basic health care, and organized, noncommercial recreation, the reach of services lags far behind. Straggling in the very rear are the range of prevention and second chance programs designed for teenagers at risk or already in trouble.

Balkanization of Youth Service

The most pernicious effect of the deviancy theory, the hue and cry after the latest youth problem, is the specialization of the youth service and, since the late 1970s, its balkanization into autonomous fiefdoms. This trend, which began to accelerate during the Carter Administration years, has now reached epidemic

proportions. The contemporary youth service world is analogous to the pre-World War II terrain of New Guinea, where 25 percent of the world's spoken languages comfortably co-existed on the same island. Each valley spoke its own unique language and organized its own affairs, only vaguely aware that more than a neighboring tribe or two existed in the rest of the world. Such is the world of much of today's American youth service.

This situation is maintained by academic and professional specialists and a host of single-problem advocacy groups that compete for limited public and legislative attention, funds, and recognition for the superiority of their particular approach to solving youth problems. The public shares this primitive view of aiding teenagers. Young youth workers have trouble explaining to their parents what they do for a living. The public view of youth work swings between images of scout jamborees and gang warfare, with little in between.

Many adults have become aware that new and different youth programs exist. While they may embrace out of family necessity a particular youth program, such as Second Genesis, Tough Love, or Students Against Drunk Driving, few have enough information to take a broad view of a range of supportive services for adolescents. Parents of teens involved in drug abuse ardently support the local drug treatment program. Local business executives who want relatively stable young adults prepared for entry-level employment support a training program for high school dropouts. The same community's mental health professionals, alarmed by teenage pregnancy, advocate a narrow program aimed at this supposedly discrete target population.

The fragmentation of youth services is exacerbated by the Byzantine world of funding. At some early stage, any youth service program must confront the need for money. Soon, the narrowly focused, specialized programs have joined, without knowing it, the largely invisible yet harshly competitive American way of financing youth service system. They will begin to approach funding sources that typically

take a narrow view of their mission, as dictated by law, policy, or convenience. One source will only fund drug abuse work, another job training, and a third health care.

Few politicians, grantmakers, service providers, and clients' families ponder for long the fact that many teenagers targeted and served by different programs are generally the same young people. In the real world of at-risk youth, the same teenager is often a dropout, a drug abuser, already or about to be a mother or father, in need of mental health care, and unemployable in the local labor market. A recent Washington Post story followed one troubled teenager through several dozen agencies in which he was "helped" by 159 professionals.

Of all the barriers to developing effective programs for high-risk youth, one of the most insurmountable is the legislative committee system. Congressional and state legislative committees, guided by professionals trained in narrow academic disciplines or workplace experience, usually conceptualize youth as drug-users, runaways, or youth in need of job training. Teenagers, of course, don't have those self-images. And the repetitive narrowing of disconnected youth's social reality into a particular symptom or deviancy is applauded by an ever growing Greek chorus of highly specialized special interest trade associations. The result is a fragmentation of youth work into incoherent, largely ineffective, hit or miss services, scattered at random across the nation's communities by an inflexible and uncoordinated bureaucracy.

The American system, with its fragmentation of services among specialized interest groups, reminds one of the old French concept of immobilisme, which is political paralysis due to power being scattered among too many fragmented groups with more power to prevent action than to create solutions. This process of political fission spawns new interest groups, time without end. Ironically, this process stresses effective action for change, but produces little real change. Form replaces substance, and manipulation of the political process for narrow sectarian

ends, in the youth service field, leads to programmatic chaos.

How else to explain the compulsive drive to splinter except by looking at the quest for funds, a place in the sun for professionals, and the politicians' need to do something about the youth deviancy-of-the-month as defined by the media? How else to explain the proliferation of multiple and competing groups, each of which deals with some narrow teen-age issue? Each trade group, youth problem, or media-fed crisis competes against all others for attention, political support, and public and private funding. The chaotic results are evident, though few in the policy and grantmaking arenas have given much thought to the roles they unwittingly play in the overall frenzied process. And the process is very expensive, drawing enormous amounts of money and staff time away from program development and enhancement and direct services to young people.

Western Europeans (see The European Experience below) have been able to develop a more comprehensive, integrated, and less deviancy-oriented youth service. The method by which they legislate may help explain why. To simplify, the party in power works with the career civil service to address the issue of disconnected youth. After private consultations with interested groups, a government bill is drafted behind closed doors. The focus remains on the issue at hand, not, as in America, on specialized professional interests, media coverage, or consideration about a legislative committee's jurisdiction.

At a time of its own choosing, the European government brings forth a bill which is passed, thanks to a weak committee system, strong party discipline, and the need of the government in power to prevail in all important issues. No health committee, no crime committee, no education committee, and no drug abuse committee carves up the program and cuts the youth population into jurisdictional pieces completely at variance with adolescent reality.

III. THE PROBLEMS OF FUNDING

The ramshackle funding structure for youth service work leads to two kinds of funding problems. First, the specialization in funding promoted by the single-purpose advocacy groups, the legislative committee system, and their bureaucratic creations makes the delivery of comprehensive services all but impossible. Second, the short-term nature of funding for most at-risk youth work leads to a Sisyphean struggle for support, excessive personnel stress within the youth service agencies, and instability of the program services provided.

The problem of single-purpose focused grants in youth work has its parallel in higher education. Christopher F. Edley, president of the United Negro College Fund, complained in a recent interview with The Chronicle of Higher Education about the corporate practice of special-purpose grants at the expense of general support grants for black colleges. "...Corporations insist on feeding us caviar when our schools are starving for rent and bread and water," he said. While no one would accuse funders of feeding youth service agencies caviar, grants focused on a particular problem make the delivery of comprehensive services to youth very difficult, if not impossible. Some large multi-purpose agencies such as The Door in New York City and Youth and Family Services in Ames, Iowa, have been able to break through these barriers, but most youth agencies and the communities they serve lag far behind.

Damage Caused by Overly Specialized Funding

With each specialized public bureaucracy funding its own youth program, little opportunity or real incentive exists to cooperate, coordinate, or engage in any long-range planning process that could potentially result in a loss of control over money or staff positions by any of the participating governmental units. While most political appointees and civil servants know little about developing youth services, they are keenly aware that the day they lose the power to award funds is the last day their "constituency" or "community" will darken their door.

Many of these problems are well-known to sophisticated policymakers. All are well-known to seasoned, non-profit youth agency directors. Frustration with the administration and ineffectiveness of public funds that aid at-risk youth leads to periodic but predictable outbursts of activity by politicians and community leaders. These efforts at reform usually arise from one of the following events.

The first is the highly publicized event -- The Front Page Problem. Efforts to do something about a particular youth problem often come from the outside local communities, often from Washington, D.C. Typically someone with clout and money in Congress, a federal executive agency, or a large foundation decides to deal with a perceived or actual crisis. However, the real cause of the crisis is the lack of a sound youth development strategy and a well-functioning youth service system. Teenagers, so the prevailing reasoning goes, do not need supportive, accessible, non-commercial programs if there is no crisis. Advocates of some established, known, and often relatively stable program area want to jump to the front of the competitive funding queue -- specifically, the new groups working in teen suicide, the children of alcoholics, and others "problem" areas. AIDS education is coming on strong, with adolescent sex offenders close behind.

Second, the shaky existence of undermanned, underfunded, and too often poorly lead local programs is largely ignored by national groups determined to address the latest youth crisis that threatens to engulf the nation and, of course, land a large federal discretionary grant. The national agency, or even more the consulting firm, funded to "do something" flies in an alleged expert who makes a speech in time to get on the local evening news announcing the formation of a task force on the problem, makes the obligatory site visit to the subjectively chosen "exemplary program" for a photo opportunity, and leaves town. After that, the local group gets "technical assistance," typically from a pool of barely qualified young adult professionals who deliver the same bland platitudes and ridiculous administrative edicts to a youth service agency, eager to get grades and more funds,

shares few of its real staff and administrative problems with outsiders connected to future funding politics.

Third, the ostensibly comprehensive plan also engenders reform efforts. In this regard, a wag once commented that the history of Protestantism is the history of reformers who thought they were founding a church and wound up with a pew. This has also been the fate thus far of American efforts for planning services for troubled youth. Federal, state, and municipal governments are strewn with coordinating councils that coordinate next to nothing of substance, powerless youth commissions, and castrated government-controlled child advocacy offices. Even non-governmental youth service coalitions and trade associations are dependant on and indirectly controlled by a single governmental funding source. Most such coalitions deteriorate in a few years from independent, aggressive, reform-oriented organizations into quiescent groups fed a regular diet of busy work grants. Thus the watch dog becomes the lap dog. The unwritten but well-understood universal rules are:

- o Rarely criticize the policy and administrative practices of the government agency that is funding the umbrella group and assumed to be evaluating and monitoring its program. Never, but never, publicly single out misguided or incompetent political appointees or staff member by name.
- o The "kept coalition" must in exchange proclaim that all of the programs funded by their sponsoring government agency are terrific, that hordes of young people with the same problem desperately need the same services, and, most important, that each program could soon vanquish its chosen youth problem, given adequate financial support.

Thus does the trade association become the company union masquerading as an advocacy group.

Some groups, trying to put the best face on a bad situation, even brag about their close "cooperative and harmonious" relationships with the governmental agencies that fund them. The system comes full circle when the ostensibly independent organization is called upon by the legislative appropriating body to supply its unique expertise on what to do about its specialty youth problem. Instead of hearing the unvarnished facts about services to young people, the

testimony is composed of half-truths and self-serving statements about the governmental agency and the program it administers. This destructive policy and oversight deficiency cycle could be corrected if foundations would fund true advocacy groups, especially at the statewide level.

Effects of Short-term Funding

Some program areas are reasonably well-funded and stable, for example, secondary school budgets and maximum security prisons for convicted juvenile felons. In between lies an enormous range of youth programs for which, predictably, the level and purpose of funding is subject to kaleidoscopic change and uncertainty.

Fashion and fad play a large role in funding decisions. This is not surprising because few legislators or foundation executives have much expertise in youth services or much inclination to gain any. Given a short attention span and the always impending next election, funders tend to favor popular fads over establishing durable programs which gradually engender broad public support for youth services.

The director of a multi-service youth agency can have little confidence in even the best-intended public policy efforts on behalf of long-range planning. The best community-based agency directors possess an excellent long-term sense of how they want the agency to develop and enhance its range of services. But to reach their program developmental goals, they must be sensitive to constant changes in public, political, bureaucratic, and media perceptions of youth problems and needs.

In reality, young people's service needs change slowly and incrementally from one year to the next. Directors know they must respond to windows of opportunity for funding, media exposure, and beneficial alliances. Typically, much of next year's income, and often all income for future years, is a matter of conjecture, probabilities, and possibilities. For the typical agency, all funding is discretionary.

In a chronically underfunded youth service system, "old money" quickly becomes spoken for by existing agencies regardless of their effectiveness. In San

Francisco, for example, a program funded for many years by the Department of Health and Human Services to serve runaway and homeless youth drifted into serving only court-referred youth, who are per diem reimbursable. Meanwhile, in the Tenderloin area, male and female juvenile prostitution flourishes among adrift and homeless youth.

For years, the only politically acceptable solution within the city's service provider community was to ignore the problem until, thanks to media pressure, new money not specifically aimed at runaway and homeless youth was found to fund a new specialized youth agency, the Larkin Street Youth Center. The new agency then began the inevitable quest for other funds, and a clash between the now rival agencies is now underway. The Larkin Street Youth Center was the subject of an April 1988 Newsweek feature story on street kids. Unfortunately, an otherwise helpful account was riddled with bogus statistics.

The trendiness in youth funding does have advantages. The new funds generated by the currently fashionable youth problem pump new and sometimes better-targeted funding into the youth services field. This new money is the experienced program director's preferred opportunity for survival or expansion. The director knows that the agency has only a limited amount of time and administrative money to spend on proposal writing. First priority goes to high-probability renewals of existing grants. Next comes new money pots. That explains why, in the spring of 1987, more than 800 agencies applied to the Office of Substance Abuse Prevention (OSAP), Alcohol Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, for \$22 million in new grants to aid at-risk youth. Over 80 percent of the proposals were rejected. Yet OSAP's 13 large grant awards made it the principal national target for many youth agency directors.

Special circumstances can shift an agency director's proposal-writing priorities. All of these circumstances are rooted in the politicized and competitive nature of

the youth service world, not in the evolving world of adolescent culture. These include board, media, or political pressure to develop a program, requests by service delivery allies to jointly pursue a funding possibility, the sudden demise of a neighboring agency and the consequently unexpected availability of funds, a defensive desire to prevent a rival agency from getting or keeping a particular grant or program, or, in rare circumstances, pressure from youth or community groups to develop a particular service or program.

In the short-term funding environment, the youth agency director constantly lives with intense pressure of raising funds to meet the payroll and pay the rent. Detailed long-term planning becomes something to which directors aspire but little practical attention can be given. And that is a rational response since most fundraising efforts are aimed at ephemeral money pots.

Many grants require annual renewal and are contingent on a variety of factors, often beyond the control of either the grantmaker or the recipient. Agency directors consider three-year grants far more desirable than a one-year grant, even if the one-year grant is larger. In considering what proposals to write, astute directors carefully consider the number of years of the grant (the longer, the better) and the total amount. In this case, bigger is not always better, since multi-million dollar requests for proposals attract peripheral players, such as consulting firms, universities, hospitals, and for-profit organizations -- and therefore increase competition. A three-year grant for about \$200,000 per year -- with services delivered by existing staff for youth, many of whom are already in the agency's service network -- is considered the perfect grant award in the community-based youth service field.

IV. TOP TO BOTTOM STAFF AND LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS

With distressing frequency, youth service agencies are not well-served by

competent, experienced, trained staff members. Staff problems afflict both the agencies and organizations that provide funds and those that provide services.

Staffing the Bureaucracy

Public agencies administering funds for youth programs are often staffed from top to bottom by mediocre people with virtually no relevant training or serious interest in further in-service training. Often the top jobs go to political appointees involved in the youth and student wing of the prevailing political candidates' campaign.

For example, a prominent black supporter of Ohio's Democratic Governor Celeste was appointed to run the large and troubled Ohio Youth Commission, the state's youth correction agency. The appointee's most relevant youth-related experience was serving on the Cleveland Library Board. Not only did he do a poor job of running the agency, but, while serving, he was indicted and later convicted of embezzlement and taking bribes.

The youth job is too often the Postmaster General slot of the 1980s. Few mayors or governors would turn over the sewage treatment plant to a novice. Without hesitation, most appoint a young political loyalist who, from the mayor's or governor's point of view, has some other asset. These appointees are often former athletic stars or coaches or members of a minority group otherwise poorly represented in the upper echelons of the administration and important to the political party in power. The New York City Youth Board was run for years by a likable but ineffective former basketball star.

In the youth corrections field, many rise through a corrections system that harbors an overriding concern with security and control and a pervasive cynicism toward rehabilitation. Apparently, governors and their advisors believe a good reformatory guard can develop and maintain quality programs for the most difficult to understand and treat citizens of the state.

For example, the District of Columbia has arguably the nation's worst youth

corrections system. It indisputably has more juveniles per capita under lock and key than any other jurisdiction in the country. The city's most pressing need is to develop more competently run community-based youth programs. Yet, the mayor insists on hiring senior staff with a youth corrections background who have little grasp of how to develop youth programs. The predictable result is that the city has both a shameful youth corrections system through which 6,000 juveniles pass each year and an underdeveloped and overwhelmed range and of local youth services.

Candidates recruited from academia for their alleged expertise with student youth suffer from similar disabilities. They often lack the professional insight and management skills to promote a viable range of services. Their performance calls to mind the adage: A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Both types of administrator manage their agencies defensively. They rightly fear tabloid headlines: "Released Youth Killer Rapes Grandmother," which has signaled the end of many a managerial career in youth corrections.

The leadership situation is as bad in adolescent mental health programs. Lack of administrative and managerial skills hampers too many mental health professionals. In part, this is because they are trained in university, hospital, and clinical settings that are, compared to community-based youth service agencies, awash in money and staff support. Except in controlled residential settings, few trained mental health professionals have been outstanding youth service program developers or administrators. Unprepared to operate in the semi-arid fiscal desert of high-risk youth work, most quickly retreat to safer youth work domains in schools, hospitals, traditional child welfare agencies, and private practice.

Impact of Bureaucratic Staffing on Youth Work

Successful local youth work directors fully grasp the shortcomings of those from whom they must get funds or perish. In a bureaucratic life-and-death mating game, the directors try to capture these transient amateurs who hold the purse

strings. Through political positioning, board member influence, media exposure, and personal contact, the director has two goals:

- o To persuade the new grantmaker to continue or enlarge financial support for the youth agency.
- o To convince the grantmaker that any cut in funding will result in excessive political discomfort for the grantmaker and his ambitions for professional advancement within the youth service field.

Civil servants present the director of a public agency with a somewhat different challenge. Often children and youth sections of these agencies are dumping grounds for problem employees and junior campaign aides. Few, if any, of these bureaucrats ever planned on a career in aiding high-risk youth. Stories about their incompetence, naivete, and lethargy are legendary in the youth service field. Anecdotes about civil servants unwilling to make a site visit a few miles from their office because they can't get travel reimbursements are staples of the dark humor of the at-risk youth field. Stories abound of bureaucrats who were unwilling to sit on the youth agencies' battered and presumably germ-infested furniture.

With either the political appointee or civil servant, the local youth agency director's goal is the same -- to get funding proposals approved. Directors employ a range of methods familiar to many fields. The director or the deputy (depending on who's conducting the agency's "foreign policy") take careful aim. Prearranged site visits for the politicians are the mutually preferred event. The agency is shined and polished to look its best. Politicians like clean program sites, not well-used, often rundown surroundings. The youth are stage center, perhaps with an influential supporter or two brought in for a meeting over a simple lunch.

The grantmaker, whether public or private, has little professional training or experience with which to evaluate the program. Impressions are formed based on personal rapport with the director, the program's visibility, clout with the community and media, and perhaps a well-delivered testimonial by a salvaged teenager. Kids playing drums, doing somersaults, or role-playing in a violent family

dispute are well-known favorites for visiting grantmakers.

The protocol is strictly observed by both parties. An unannounced visit by the grantmaker during the evening would be considered foul play. Public criticism by the youth service agency director of a political appointee's negligence or incompetence in aiding children in trouble would be grounds for the politician to wage a full-scale effort to cut all funds to the offending agency, even if it was universally considered the best provider of aid to high-risk youth in the entire community.

For instance, the universally respected Kentucky Youth Advocates (KYA) recently lost the support of a powerful state legislator because KYA opposed the controversial jailing of youth with adults. Soon, KYA expects to lose all state financial support as a result of its principled stand in support of widely accepted national standards.

The youth agency director either does the bureaucrats' jobs for them or finds ways to work around an obstructive non-performer. Too often, mediocre civil servants exercise their pettiness and the avoidance of risk by their highly self-valued authority to say "no." The power is negative since only the rare civil servant has the power and skill to advance, enhance, or develop a direct service program for at-risk youth. The better civil servants, and some are excellent, are soon discovered by youth service directors who rely on them to help navigate the bureaucratic mazes to get and maintain funding.

Few youth service agencies look to either public or private grantmakers for more than money. To the degree possible, contact is superficial. While local youth service agencies must interact with the public and private funding sources, the local directors generally believe, with good reason, that they have little to learn from those who do fund them and who presumably have expertise in the field. This lack of professional respect for grantmakers is never discussed publicly since such truthful utterances of this open trade secret would undoubtedly cost the speaker

considerable support in the important grantmaking community.

The Youth Agency Director's Dilemma

In this Kafkaesque world, the manager of a direct service program for youth has two principal tasks:

- o To fund, maintain, and if possible, expand services to at-risk youth and their families.
- o To recruit, train, and retain staff who can effectively deliver on the commitments made to agency supporters and the youth served.

Faced with an uncertain financial future, which inexorably draws the agency leadership into perpetual grantsmanship, attention to staff development and the quality of care often suffer. Yet to ignore this need invites even more difficulties in raising enough money to adequately staff the agency and do a good job for its youthful clients.

This is the essential dilemma which confronts each agency director. The "evaluation" of the agency's effectiveness is firmly in the hands of funders who must necessarily judge by quantity not by quality and by style over substance. An agency director who doubles the budget and staff in a few years is judged by all as a success. A director who concentrates on upgrading the quality of counseling and care, in-service training and staff competence, wages, and working conditions, but whose budget and staff remain stable, is considered a lesser figure. Not surprisingly, throughout the youth service world, a conspiracy of silence exists about quality of care issues. Instead, lip service is given to standards while the agency pursues only the licensing and accrediting most likely to generate financial support.

Leadership and the Board of Directors

Another common barrier to services for high risk youth is the competency of the board of directors of non-profit community based youth service agencies. Board members who have sufficient knowledge to assess the effectiveness of an agencies staff and operations are hard to find. Many agency directors do not try to find

them. Often non-profit agency directors aim to recruit a board dominated by those helpful only in private fundraising events or in community relations. Agency directors fear, and with considerable historical justification, that board members with professional program expertise in operating an agency can become part of a true performance accountability system.

Experienced directors also know that "staff rebellions" aimed at the executive director pose a principle threat to their job tenure. In order to reduce the likelihood of loosing their jobs, insecure agency directors typically opt for a board with little programmatic knowledge and infrequent contact with the paid staff. The board members' value, the directors reason, is primarily their ability to enhance the agency's fundraising and public relations ability.

For a minority of youth service agencies, managed by competent and dynamic executive directors, this arrangement can, and does, work well during their tenure. But for the poorly managed agency soon and for the well run agency later, a change of executive directors must occur. At this point (barring earlier fiscal, legal, media or programmatic crises), the board of directors must make its first hard decision in years and choose a successor. The board's deficiencies then come into play. Most youth service agencies experience serious problems in finding and keeping a competent successor. Too often, there is a war of succession with board, staff, and funders divided on the issue. Few deputies make outstanding directors, and graduate schools churn out a weak leadership product. The safest source for a new director is to hire someone away from another agency where they have gotten on-the-job training on someone else's payroll.

However, the typical board will look first to the current staff and only then (if the agency can afford the cost of advertising) to respondents of newspaper ads. And worst of all, some boards look among their own membership.

The results of a poorly prepared board making decisions in such a marginalized and standardless field are often tragic. Recently, a Houston youth agency's board,

faced with a staff rebellion, fired its veteran director. He was replaced by what the board thought would be a whiz bang manager. After all, the board reasoned, he had run a profitable fast food restaurant. After a year of his fast food management in the fast track world of the once prosperous youth service agency, it collapsed into bankruptcy.

A great challenge is to develop management boards that balance program knowledge with the disinterested fiduciary role that boards, by law, are expected to play. Rhetoric about America's volunteer spirit notwithstanding, there is a real shortage of qualified board members who can become givers, not takers, for community based youth service agencies. Ironically, the federal government spends millions each year on training and technical assistance to non-profits working with at-risk youth. Unfortunately, the caliber of the training is so poor that few who need to attend these free sessions are inclined to do so.

The Insuperable Barrier: Local Staffing Problems

Given the range of problems facing youth service agencies, problems of assembling a competent staff to actually serve youth in need should come as no surprise. Compared to the magnitude of the problem, the resources dedicated to providing youth services are ludicrously minuscule. Indeed, the human services sector as a whole has been starved for resources, and youth services constitute the bottom of the heap.

This dismal state of finances indicates the priorities the nation places on helping those most in need to join the economic and social mainstream. Although children and youth are touted as "our most precious resource," their actual value is regarded as something less than the rhetoric suggests, given the salaries and conditions faced by those who work with them. It is impossible to maintain stable, competent, quality services with the salaries, hours, and working conditions that staff members of youth services agencies encounter. In the past few years, a bookshelf full of studies on the education of America's youth has appeared.

Predictably, they call for higher standards for students and higher pay for teachers. All feature the obligatory lament of the minority students' below par performance on a wide range of social and educational indicators.

Another bookshelf would be needed to hold the family policy studies cranked out by groups on the political left and right. They argue that all will be well if child-rearing practices and assistance are strengthened and incentives to parents are provided.

Neither the school reform nor family policy pundits take adequate account of the economic and social changes that have increased pressures on schools and families and made many communities alienating and frightening places for adolescents to live. Reformers ignore the need for a third force -- youth work--to help respond to the needs neither the family nor the school can, for whatever reason, address successfully.

Nor does either approach squarely face the reality that many teenagers face. Virtually ignored in most studies are the one in four who will drop out of high school, who urgently need legal employment, and for whom second chance counseling and training programs offer the best hopes. Even if schools were vastly improved and family-strengthening measures were ushered through Congress, many youth would not be served.

A weak and poorly paid and trained youth service would still be called upon to work miracles with about five million out-of-school underclass youth. Certainly, if training and pay are so important for teachers who serve the academically top 75% of young people, it should be at least as important for community-based youth workers who serve the bottom 25%.

Over the past few years, while relative wages for teachers who fail with one in four of our young people have risen, wages for the "B Team" of youth workers have dropped. Ten years ago, a youth worker earned $\frac{2}{3}$ the pay of a secondary school teacher. Today, it is down to $\frac{1}{2}$.³⁸ And youth workers frequently work

nights and weekends the year round. Yet, an examination of hiring, working conditions, and pay policies amply shows that youth service workers in community-based agencies are right down there with their clients in the bottom 25 percent, by any conventional measures other than worker satisfaction. They are the underclass of the human service field. The inadequate information on staff compensation and working conditions indicates a dismal reward for those who work with youth.

A study by the Child Welfare League of America, CWLA Salary Study 1987, found that median salaries of child welfare workers in voluntary agencies fare poorly in comparison with other occupations. The median salary of social workers with M.S.W. degrees "falls below the median salaries for most school teachers (who work for nine months), mail carriers, firefighters, registered nurses, and auto salesmen," the study said. For example, the median salary for social workers with M.S.W. degrees was \$21,200, compared to \$21,944 for elementary school teachers, \$25,012 for high school teachers, and \$28,548 for telephone line repairmen. Social work practitioners with other graduate degrees and residential supervisors made only \$18,800 and \$18,000 respectively. These two youth service professions were at the bottom of the barrel among the occupations surveyed by the League.

The League's study also found that teachers and recreation workers make less in settings focused on at-risk youth than when they work in other settings.

Further, the study reported that eight child welfare positions lost more than 10% in buying power between 1975 and 1987. The declines ranged from 10.8% for district directors to 23.5% for residential supervisors; social work practitioners with M.S.W. degrees lost 15.2% in buying power.

The disparities among salaries for those who work in similar occupations that require similar skills borders on the ludicrous. A May 23, 1988 The New York Times article reported that the average annual salaries of Heads Start teachers in and publicly financed daycare programs were \$19,108 and \$19,365 respectively, compared to \$33,363 for public school pre-school and kindergarten teachers doing

essentially the same job .

Moreover, in full-employment Massachusetts, a newly hired youth worker with a college degree currently can expect to earn from \$13,000 to \$17,000 for a 50-hour work week, including evenings and weekends. Human service, entry-level wages in Massachusetts are now among the lowest advertised in the Boston Globe. It is no wonder that staff vacancies are the Massachusetts service provider community's number one problem.

In a profession already drastically underpaid, and with buying power declining annually, skilled and motivated people are driven to other work, and the field fails to attract enough competent and committed people. For example, a 1984 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics survey reported a 42% turnover rate in childcare occupations.

The human service field in general and the youth service field in particular are suffering from drastic staff shortages. Qualified people simply do not seek careers in a field that offers little hope for a decent living wage. Five years ago, in Maryland, 32% of state child protective service workers had M.S.W. degrees. Today, the figure is 22% and still dropping. At the same time, 60% of Maryland's recent M.S.W. graduates head directly for private practice, with its third party health insurance reimbursements. A 1987 survey of human services in New York City found that 82% of non-profit managers listed recruitment and retention as among the three most important problems their agencies face; for 40%, this was the most important concern of their agency.

In interviews, the managers reported that "lack of money is the only subject that surpasses personnel shortages as a clear and immediate problem," according to Short-Staffed! The Personnel Crisis in New York City's Voluntary Human Service Agencies by Interface, which conducts research on public policy issues affecting the city.

In the face of this massive reluctance to work in youth service occupations,

many large agencies spend more than a startling \$50,000 per year just in help wanted advertisements in daily newspapers. Some agencies, with vacancy rates ranging from 10-40%, hold positions open for years while seeking a qualified minority professional to fill a particular position.

Efforts to reduce staff shortages often run into problems. Recently, in Washington, D.C., 83% of otherwise qualified applicants for youth work employment failed a drug test.

Ironically, low wages, long hours, and difficult working conditions are the lot of those who work with the most difficult of our young people. Coming from highly stressful and dangerous environments that offer little opportunity, these young people may be suspicious, hostile, resistant to help and supervision, and hopeless.

Obviously, these conditions are unlikely to attract sufficient numbers of college students to youth work, especially in the Yuppie generation. A few college students may feel a vague pull toward working with teenagers, but usually in the context of recreation, clinical social work, teaching, or psychology.

For many in the youth service field, the call to serve comes in a classified advertisement. The standards are so low in the 1980s that all are called and most are chosen. In addition to low wages and long hours, clients are often abusive toward staff, pre-service training is virtually non-existent, and in-service training is an erratic lunacy for all but the best youth service agencies. Youth work is not a career path likely to be chosen by ambitious and talented young adults.

Until youth work is placed on a par with other equally demanding professions, the difficulties of staffing local youth service agencies will likely remain an insuperable barrier to comprehensive and effective youth services.

V. THE IDEAL YOUTH SERVICE SYSTEM

Harvard University's "Redbook," General Education in a Free Society, proclaimed that "the best way to infect the student with the zest for intellectual integrity is to put him near a teacher who is himself selflessly devoted for truth." Slightly paraphrased, the Harvard motto could be a good one for youth work -- the best way to infect an adolescent with a zest for responsible citizenry is to put him or her near a youth worker who is selflessly devoted to competent service.

An ideal service delivery system for youth must rest on broad public understanding and support. This will require a 20 to 30 year public education effort, similar to the successful anti-cigarette smoking campaign or anti-littering campaign of the past 40 years, that aims to convince the public of two things: (1) It is no longer realistic to depend on just the family and the school to help children reach responsible adulthood. (2) Youth need and deserve a broad range of services and programs. These often must be separate from family and school to minimize an array of social problems and to maximize the number of young Americans who will become self-sufficient, patriotic, and socially responsible taxpaying adults. Even this last point cannot be taken for granted. Today more young black men are in prison than college.

Need for a Coherent Approach

Once this public education campaign establishes the need and legitimacy of youth work in the public mind as something other than an ad hoc or crisis-driven activity, a coherent policy and planning process for universal access will become possible. Current agendas that focus on reforming the schools, saving the family, or crisis-of-the-day interventions, while parading under the banner of a national youth policy, are doomed to be little more than sermons that feed the national defeatism, cynicism, and resistance toward aiding troubled youth.

The ideal system would help young people develop in a healthy manner instead

of trying to patch up problems after they occur. Non-governmental grantmakers should fill youth development needs that are not currently met with the aim of developing a comprehensive system. To do that, private grantmakers need considerable training. Youth service agencies should be funded to befriend and counsel at-risk youth and to generate activities for a particular neighborhood. This approach was pioneered by Jane Addams and the settlement house movement 75 years ago. Use of the proffered service by youth would be the single most important evaluation factor. Recreation should be an integral part of any comprehensive youth development strategy. Such programs exist. The Police Boys' Club and the better settlement houses offer such programs, but they are underfunded and overwhelmed by clients, in part because adjoining neighborhoods often lack similar programs. Ideally, each teenager should be able to find an attractive program or combination of programs that firmly connects him or her to society through positive young adult and adult role models, a goal that will require more, and better-trained and retained youth workers.

Meeting Youths' Real Needs

The language and problem-oriented mindset of deviancy must be stripped from youth service work. No child wants to be the target of a delinquency or drug abuse prevention grant, nor is there any sound youth development of public policy reason why he or she should be. Rather, programs should deal with the needs of youth as they occur, where they occur, and for as long as they occur. Indeed a more positive approach to young people and programs tailored for them would go a long way toward reducing the behaviors that the deviancy model unintentionally engenders.

A central element in a successful youth service system must be pluralism in programs and approaches, adapted to fit the needs of particular youth populations. The youth service field is bedeviled by a fruitless search for the perfect, cost effective, 100 percent reliable program or counseling approach that will solve any

youth problem. Americans seem to believe that somehow they can find the magic wand that will solve, say, the juvenile crime problem. Ten years ago, "Scared Straight" seemed to provide the answer. Then came "Tough Love," and so on. No one program or approach will work with all adolescents -- or for the same adolescent as personal circumstances, or even moods, change. While stories about how one program or individual singlehandedly saved certain youth make great copy for Reader's Digest, they really make the point, backhandedly, that these opportunities are too rare and should be available for all young people. A range of choices must be available, not just one program or none at all.

Each program in this system would attract youth through the least coercive means available. One would hope that with a comprehensive and pluralistic system that meets the true needs of youth, coercion by the courts, schools, parents, or social workers would wither away. Young people, with the help of their families and mentors, would choose programs that are best for them. Funding and programming would be adequate to support the needed range of choices and to ensure that a program did not collapse because it was oversubscribed or underfunded and understaffed. On the other hand, programs that could not attract youth and families would lose their funding.

Further, in a successful system, most youth programs would be truly community-based. For most teens, this means services would be available in their own town, neighborhood, or at the very least within their own secondary school district. A boy's club across town or a group home in the next county are not, for most youth, community-based services.

Ideally, youth programs involve youth in their development and operation. Youth often have a keen understanding of their needs that may be invisible to adults. In recent years, youth polls in St. Louis, Minneapolis, and Seattle have found that youth appreciate their own needs and comprehend the shortcomings of institutions designed to serve them.

Some recognition and accommodation must be made with the increasing commercialization of youth recreation, entertainment, and services. Youth commercialization is a major policy discussion topic in Western Europe but is routinely ignored in the United States. This could be fertile ground for a real public-private partnership on behalf of young people.

An ideal youth service delivery system cannot be mounted without adequate staff training. This means that youth workers need education and training before beginning work and while in service. Universities need to give as much attention to youth work preparation as they do to teaching or to the narrowly specialized professions that address isolated youth problems. Youth service agencies must have the time and resources to provide in-service training for their staff members and to provide service to help them develop professionally. Given today's high turnover in youth service work, staff retention must receive considerable attention. This means adequate pay and benefits and a reasonable work schedule that does not induce premature burnout.

Finally, for all of this to work, financing youth service programs must be more rational and purposeful. That is probably more important than simply increasing funds. Funding mechanisms to support programs that address a broad range of youth needs must replace the dog-eat-dog competition among single-purpose programs. A general purpose youth service appropriation or grant would do much to eliminate the annual scramble for funds that most youth programs must now engage in.

VI. EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE YOUTH SERVICE SYSTEMS

Although rare, effective youth service delivery systems exist in the United States, and are common in Great Britain and most of northwestern Europe. Indeed, some elements of the European system have been adopted in the United States.

Unfortunately, these adoptions have been scanty and piecemeal.

The European Experience

In the United Kingdom and northwestern Europe, the youth service and youth social work are well-established and integral parts of the social service fabric that assists all young people in their transition to adult independence. Unlike their American counterparts, European public and private funders and service providers ask a fundamental question: How can we provide a range of activities and opportunities for young people, outside the classroom, that will lead to the development of positive values and to emotionally, culturally, and economically self-sufficient adults? They also ask where service and choice gaps exist and how they can be filled.

Building on a youth service history begun with YMCA, YWCA, the Boy Scouts and Boys Clubs, youth service programs in Britain feature a network of youth clubs and specialized programs that reach almost every youth. In a typical small English city, the local authority youth officer is a statutory full-time position. Youth work receives about 1.5 percent of the British education budget. The advice and assistance of other civil servants, political leaders, and a seemingly endless collection of committees, discuss planning and funding for youth clubs, and a range of activities to be carried out by public and voluntary service organizations. Also, the statutory youth officer helps coordinate employment, youth corrections, and other specialized youth programs. No one in Britain questions the basic approach. In the United States, a coherent approach is lacking, as is support to develop one.

In addition, Great Britain makes special efforts to reach "unaffiliated youth" who avoid established programs. These efforts are built on the firm foundations of the existing youth service. For instance, a detached youth worker typically works out of an existing youth club or community center. These street-oriented youth workers then have a support base and are an integrated part of a network of organizations offering support and services.

Terms like "youth worker" and "the youth service" are regularly used by the mainstream press, not just by trade publications as in the United States. European colleges train youth workers, and unions represent them in negotiating wages and working conditions. Overall, youth service programs play a regular, visible, publicly acknowledged, and understood role in European social affairs and attract the attention and support of all political parties -- especially their young leaders before and after general elections. It also attracts, by American standards, a talented pool of young adults interested in staying within the youth service field for much of their working careers.

While the United States imported many British youth organizations, in the British view, the US suffers from a case of arrested development, a pre-World War II youth service dealing with 21st century youth needs. The post-World War II years in the United Kingdom, however, witnessed the emergence of an established professionalized youth service, basically understood and supported by government and public alike. Support, sizable by American standards, led to the development of services oriented toward positive youth development and toward filling gaps in service caused by changing social and economic conditions. Happily missing is the American need to defensively justify why there should be a particular program or even a youth service at all. Programs can be developed and funded without hopped-up statistics and a media drum beat of imminent social peril that characterizes each dubious lurch forward in American youth service programs.

Unfortunately, the brisk market in imported British youth programs (Boy and Girl Scouts, YMCA, Boys' Clubs, and John Howard Association, among others) disappeared after World War II. While British youth work continued to mature, evolve, and become more institutionalized, its American cousin took a different path, in reality, to a cul de sac.

Constructive American Efforts

Despite their rarity, a number of promising exceptions exist in an otherwise

bleak youth service picture in the United States.

New York State has established a system similar to Great Britain's. Except in New York City, increasingly professionalized youth boards have helped the state develop good, if inadequate, services and shape a sound long-range planning mechanism for identifying and filling gaps in service provisions.

The system appears to work best in mid-sized New York counties. Several counties, Dutchess and Monroe, for example, have built a well-coordinated countywide system. The county youth board helps with grantsmanship, in-service training, staff recruiting, and policy analysis aimed at improving or expanding needed services. This assistance lessens the planning and political burden on the local community-based youth service agencies. It aids them in dealing as peers with the school, court, welfare, and police bureaucracies. While all of the problems documented in this paper exist in Troy or Horseheads, New York, they are muted. And when they are compared to equivalent communities in other states, the virtues of the New York approach become even more apparent.

But the most discouraging thing about the New York success, which includes extensive service to rural youth, is that no other state has adopted a similar program. Even more telling is that no federal agency or national foundation has, in the 20 years of my professional memory, examined the New York system and tried to urge its adaptation by other states. Shunning the New York model is due to the poorly trained and overspecialized denizens of the grantmaking world. The problems raised elsewhere in this paper -- the deviancy theory, addiction to the quick fix orientation, and the public invisibility of the youth service -- are recipes for continued ignorance and failure.

Another bright spot is the emergence in the past 15 years of independently funded, technically and politically savvy statewide children and youth advocacy groups such as Kentucky Youth Advocates, the Ohio Youth Services Network, and New York's Statewide Youth Advocates. These groups, with strong, stable, self-

taught leadership, seek to diversify their funding. They draw as little as possible on funds from agencies which they oversee and with which they must inevitably clash. They are able to analyze the state budget and to offer comprehensive advice to legislators, bureaucrats, the press, and service providers.

At their best, these groups have been able to bring technically competent and politically potent skills to the child and youth policy process. State and local governments have found their administrative efforts independently monitored by groups willing to make specific, forceful recommendations on funding priorities. Needless to say, the groups are highly controversial and often intensely disliked by those they monitor. They tend to be equally unpopular with national trade associations of service providers whose real definition of advocacy is "more money for us."

Historically, many groups were linked with and sometimes started by the National Youth Work Alliance. In the 1980s, the Children's Defense Fund, Child Welfare League of America, and to a lesser extent, the American Youth Work Center have been the main Washington, D.C., support centers. Many liberals recoil at the thought of a group not only willing to urge more funds for one program or target group, but also willing to point out wasteful and effective spending that should be cut.

Many self-proclaimed advocacy groups, often trade associations in disguise, operate as apologists for state government, mimicking the penchant of bureaucrats to establish pet programs. Tactical advocacy -- actually naming names, for example, that a particular bureaucrat is totally incompetent or hostile to good service provision and should be removed -- is strictly avoided.

The pseudo-advocacy groups prefer strategic advocacy -- calling for more funds for a specific program, or issuing reports that decry a particular problem in general terms. The status quo rather likes these groups and academics and foundations find them compatible as well. It is the rare advocacy group -- thanks

to exceptionally skilled and courageous leadership -- that doesn't soon slip from watch dog to lap dog for the public agencies allegedly under surveillance. Most official and private non-profit coordinators and advocacy groups could disappear tomorrow with little adverse effect on the development of services to at-risk youth. As Eldridge Cleaver observed in another context, these groups become part of the problem, not part of the solution.

In another promising approach, a local effort in Pinellas County, Florida, the Juvenile Welfare Board, ensures an array of services to children and youth and has taxing authority to fund programs. Funding decisions, made through a community planning and prioritizing process, aim to fill service gaps. For example, the board has funded latch-key childcare programs, programs for truants and their families, family day care for children of homeless shelter residents seeking jobs or training, marriage and family counseling, mental health care, and therapy for disabled children. The Juvenile Welfare Board also supports an array of quality in-service training opportunities for youth workers. The approach is slowly spreading to other Florida counties.

These and other meritorious efforts need to be examined by policymakers and youth service agencies for the possibility of adaption to state and local circumstances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The chaotic state of the American youth service system suggests a number of feasible areas for improvement. Each is an important change in which the support of the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship can make an important contribution toward implementation.

These recommendations are for realistic, needed, and obtainable improvements that would make a real difference in the lives of many high-risk youth.

1. Urge the Advertising Council and major media outlets to undertake a sustained campaign to educate the public on the youth service and the

value of youth work for all teenagers.

2. Develop and offer without subscription fee, a professional monthly magazine similar to Youth-in-Society published in the United Kingdom. Contents could include practical, concise information on program development, management issues and trends in the youth service field in the USA and abroad. The magazine would also prominently feature job opportunities for youth workers and managers.
3. Develop extensive international staff and publication exchanges between youth service agencies in the United States and abroad, especially Canada and Western Europe.
4. Develop a program to train journalists and key governmental policymakers on youth service issues.
5. Establish a youth service information center similar to the Educational Research Information Center program which dispenses information and acts as a clearinghouse.
6. Develop a centralized source of information on pre-service and in-service training opportunities in the youth service field.
7. Develop a project to replicate the New York State planning model and the Florida special taxing districts for children and youth services model in other states by working with the service provider, community, and state governments.
8. Undertake a comprehensive national look at actual and desirable staff qualifications, pre-service and in-service training, wages, and working conditions in non-profit agencies working with high-risk youth.
9. Develop a mid-career sabbatical program for outstanding managers in the youth service field.
10. Study the feasibility of creating a small set-aside in federal and state secondary education funding for non-school based youth service programs serving high-risk youth.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Treanor is the executive director of the four-year-old Washington, DC-based American Youth Work Center. The Center promotes improved services to at-risk youth through advocacy, training, and management consultation with public and non-profit youth-serving agencies. One of its major services is encouraging links among American and foreign youth service agencies and youth workers.

In 1968, Mr. Treanor founded the DC Runaway House, which developed over the next five years into the multi-service Special Approaches in Juvenile Assistance (SAJA), then the largest alternative youth service agency in the US. In 1973, Mr. Treanor founded and directed, for seven years, the National Youth Work Alliance. In addition, Mr. Treanor has served on the DC School Board, worked for the US Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice, the United Kingdom's National youth Bureau, as an UNESCO consultant in Indonesia, and as a SCLC civil rights field worker. A high school dropout, Mr. Treanor spent three years in the U.S. Army infantry and was educated at the Georgetown School of Foreign Service and the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

A COMMENTARY

on William Treanor's

BARRIERS TO DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE YOUTH SERVICES

by Dorothy Stoneman

William Treanor's paper rings true in its description, history, and critique of the field of youth programs. Its recommendations are also on target. However, it may not go deep enough in its explication of the conceptual distortions of our body politic regarding youth development. Also, its recommendations strike me as intermediary steps, rather than a clear vision for a system of youth development. In these comments, I therefore have expanded on the conceptual problems, and have drawn up a list of complementary recommendations that may serve as a set of goals for a comprehensive system.

Conceptual Misunderstandings:

It is certainly true, as Treanor describes, that funding, staffing, and the misunderstanding of the public make it difficult to run a good youth program, and more difficult to develop a system of youth development.

However, every human service field in the United States faces the same difficulties. The public schools have fewer resource problems than most human services: they have stable funding, trained staff, public support, and a comprehensive system developed by professionals over nearly two centuries. They have, nonetheless, generally failed poor children.

For this reason, I believe the conceptual problem is a greater obstacle than the resource problem. If adequate resources were available to build a comprehensive youth development system, given the current emphasis on youth

deviance as the motivation for funding programs and the current lack of understanding of what is needed by young people, the system built would likely fail as badly as the public schools have failed in the recent period.

The public schools issue is important in this paper because one major obstacle to running a good youth program, not mentioned by Treanor, is the failure of the public schools.

Even when a youth program director succeeds in raising enough funds, attracting and holding a committed and talented staff, training them, and providing the young people with thrilling opportunities to develop themselves in a context of community service and ethical values, what he runs up against is the fact that the young people have not been educated and will not succeed in the world unless the youth program itself corrects the academic deficiencies, and sometimes the attitudes, left over from the school system's failure.

As a result, a comprehensive youth program must include a high school equivalency program, an alternative high school, a tutoring program, an education coordinator who acts as advocate for students within the schools, and a student government organizer to try to improve the schools. This is an absurd situation. More than other single thing, it is demoralizing to staff.

It is not my assignment to critique the school system. But its failure does create both obstacles to, and an urgent need for, youth programs nationwide.

Of course, the person writing a commentary on the schools might equally well say that there is another fundamental institution whose failure creates an obstacle for the school system: namely, the family. This is also true, and requires its own thoroughgoing analysis. The point I will make here is simply that the interrelationships between the institutions within a community must be considered. A drastic system of community rehabilitation is needed. A major shake-up is called

for, in which the hierarchy of power and decision-making roles are re-shuffled, enlisting the best energies and intelligence of the community people who have most to gain by improvements in local institutions, and who have suffered most from the misunderstanding of the powers-that-be.

One of these misunderstandings is, indeed, that the purpose of youth programs should be to correct youth deviancy. Another is that government should fund programs which eliminate a particular "deficit" and thereby prepare the young person to enter the mainstream. For example, a six-month training or shorter programs is supposed to reclaim a 20-year-old from years of street life, correct his academic and attitudinal problems, and send him on his way, gainfully and permanently employed by the private sector.

Short-term interventions cannot succeed in correcting the lack of a cohesive and continuous set of relationships and opportunities that guide the younger generation into a productive role in a welcoming community.

Youth programs must be long-term, available throughout the adolescence and pre-adolescence of the neighborhood's youth, and must themselves create ethical communities of support, opportunity, challenge, and productive involvement in the world.

The underlying issues are class and race. They are the issues of two Americas. In general, the people who are making policy governing the funding and availability of youth programs are middle and upper middle class white people who are raising their children in attractive, well-organized, well-funded communities in which public schools are adequate, recreational programs are impressive, churches are replete with youth groups and junior choirs, unemployment rate is low, drug and alcohol problems are behind closed doors, and the opportunity structure is visible and intact. No wonder that they imagine youth programs to be peripheral and

problem-solving -- picking up the pieces of those few young people who couldn't make it in the mainstream and who need special treatment or opportunities.

They understandably do not realize that the situation is reversed in most poor communities. The mainstream isn't working. The central institutions, more than they provide opportunities, play an oppressive role, or are under such duress themselves that they can barely function. The parents and the teachers are struggling against insuperable odds, trying to hold their families and classrooms together under the cumulative pressure of poverty, hopelessness, violence, the drug industry, racism, and lack of education and resources.

It, therefore, falls to the youth program to develop a system of opportunities and support, a mini-community that can be "like a family" and can supplement the school system and the employment system enough to compete with the addictive chaos of the street and the tight organization of the drug industry with its highly accessible system of opportunities.

We need to replace the concept of the "deviant individual" with the concept of the "oppressed community". This goes against the grain of our society, which resists seeing "oppression" anywhere in this land of opportunity. But it will be most helpful to face this reality and begin to deal with it. It is not that particular individuals have failed and need help; it is that whole communities are under such pressure that only the exceptional people succeed. The majority of people in oppressed communities need new systems of opportunity and support that compensate for the absence of adequate systems.

They also need programs that are consciously designed to counteract the particular form of oppression that has affected the young people. Thoughtful professionals need to analyze the nature of the mistreatment to young people in the oppressed community and then chart a course that is diametrically opposed to the

past mistreatment. To do that here, let's look at the mistreatment.

Young people in oppressed communities live in relative poverty and powerlessness in an affluent society that values wealth and power, gives them little respect, little opportunity, little of importance to do, and has not cared enough to protect them from the temptations of drugs, from the physical decay of their environment, from the breakdown of their families and overwork of their parents, and even from homelessness and hunger.

To succeed to the maximum extent, a program must dramatically reverse this past experience. It should bear no resemblance to the institutions and attitudes that have so far disappointed and hurt our young people.

In designing youth programs, we must chart a course that is so different from past hurts that the program will free up the young people's best energy, intelligence, trust, and hope, and engage them in the process of taking charge of their own lives and contributing to their communities.

The programs must, therefore, include the following positive elements, in contrast to the past experience of the young people:

- profound respect for their intelligence;
- power for them over their immediate environment;
- protection from disaster;
- meaningful and important work;
- real, patient caring for their development;
- actual teaching of skills;
- consistently positive values;

- family-like support and appreciation from peers and adults;
- understanding of the proud and unique history of their people;
- heightened awareness of the present-day world and their important place in it;
- a path to future opportunity;
- real concern and action from the agency about changing in the conditions that have affected them and the people they love.

If the combination of our school system and employment system included all of these elements, it would not be failing.

These elements also go a long way to eliminating the problem of attracting and retaining competent staff in youth programs. Adult staff need to be inspired by the vision and mission of the youth program as much as young people do. When there is real concern and action from the youth agency about changing conditions in the community, and when young people are truly respected and engaged in meaningful work while being developed as leaders who expect to have power over their immediate environment, adult staff begin to get real satisfaction from their own participation.

For example, let me briefly describe a successful project of the Youth Action Program.

Young people who have dropped out of school are invited to join an employment training program. They attend school half-time and work on a construction site the other half, receiving close supervision and training, plus a wage for their work. At the construction site, they rehabilitate an abandoned building, creating the most valuable commodity in their community: permanent housing for homeless and low-income people. At the school, they do academic work in small groups, with individual attention, and have access to counseling, recreation, weekend retreats, and peer support groups. They participate in a governing council

that makes on-going decisions about the program in weekly consultation with the director. Avenues for broader participation in community life are consistently opened, along with future job opportunities.

This program works to inspire and reclaim young adults from active street life. It includes all the essential elements.

The fact that program operators sometimes hit upon a program design like this one, which does counteract past mistreatment and therefore works, tends to create the kind of single-issue focus among advocates which Treanor decries.

Given the current political reality, the best way leaders in the youth field have found to increase the resources available to youth programs is to fashion programs that work and then persuade legislators that the programs should be funded. We can't wait for the successful completion of a 20-year public education campaign that will persuade the public to give broad, comprehensive support. We have to take what we know works and form coalitions that can sell it to the public right now. If we create a confusing geography of funding streams going this way and that, then so be it. At least there will be funding streams for what we have proven viable, and at least there will not be a huge bureaucracy that sops up billions of dollars and fails anyway because it doesn't understand the difference between an oppressed community and a deviant or inadequate individual.

Another significant concept that the majority of youth-serving institutions do not understand is "adultism". It refers to all the attitudes and behaviors which flow from the idea that adults are superior to young people and have the right to control, direct, punish, reward, and deprive young people as the adults decide is appropriate. This rather far-reaching disrespect of young people makes it difficult for schools, parents, and youth programs to engage the young people. It is shocking how little respect we show for the intelligence, insight, and judgment of

young people. This lack of respect is one major barrier to creating effective youth programs.

The training of adults in how to give real respect is one of the central training needs for youth workers. Until it is understood, training is likely to be about how to give "services" to "clients". The training should, instead, emphasize how to organize groups to take responsibility for their surroundings, while helping members of the group simultaneously to take responsibility for their individual lives.

Implicit in this is the necessity that youth programs emphasize leadership development and community service. If the purpose of youth programming is to develop ethical, skilled, unselfish, and committed leadership for our communities and nation, the content and results are very different from what is produced by programs whose purpose is to reclaim deviants. Of course, the approach, since it assumes the young people have enormous value, itself counteracts past mistreatment and thereby provides a basis for engaging alienated young people.

A comprehensive system of youth programming ought to emphasize leadership development and community service for the following reasons:

- 1) Every youth program and school would be improved if governed with real input from young people.
- 2) Leadership can engage young people intensely and deeply, liberating their best energies.
- 3) Real decision-making responsibility can heal the two deepest wounds of our young people:
 - low self-esteem due to consistent invalidation of their intelligence
 - feelings of powerlessness, and its companion, anger, due to being raised in a thoroughly adult-dominated world, which has not listened to the ideas of the young people.
- 4) The society needs more ethical and effective leaders at every level.

Recommendations:

I don't disagree with any of Treanor's recommendations, but they seem to lack clarity about the system we want to create.

Below are a set of recommendations that could serve as a set of goals. If implemented, I believe these would, as a set, make a qualitative difference in the relationship of young people to society in the United States. They would also require massive and coordinated funding. Most of Treanor's concrete recommendations would support these objectives:

1) A system of community service opportunities in every neighborhood, starting in third grade and going through age 21, with many projects initiated and governed by teen-agers, with exchange and communication between different communities, and an extensive system of awards in every community, county, city, state, and nationally. As much attention and prestige should be available for outstanding community service as for outstanding athletic or musical performance. The media should saturate the airwaves with videos of young people improving their environment and caring for people. The community service programs should, in most cases, be run by community-based agencies.

2) A "second-chance" system of guaranteed job training opportunities for all young people who drop out of high school. These job training opportunities should be varied, appropriate to the current job market, and accompanied by intensive academic remediation, counseling, leadership development, job placement assistance, recreation and cultural opportunities. This should be associated with an overhaul of the vocational education system. Such a system of entitlement exists in Sweden, Germany, England, and other European countries.

3) A national campaign to employ youth in a highly visible effort to tackle the most glaring problem(s) of our society, demonstrating their important role as productive citizens. Currently, the best approach would be an aggressive national campaign to employ and educate young people in the rehabilitation and construction of affordable housing for homeless people. The focus might be different in different decades. In underdeveloped countries, youth involvement in massive literacy campaigns have played a similar role. During the Depression, youth involvement in the Civilian Conservation Corps was similar. Under Kennedy, the Peace Corps provided the inspiration and symbolism, although it was designed for upper middle class college graduates. What we need in this decade is a visible, productive, dramatic role for inner city Black and Latino young people -- thus my recommendation for rebuilding abandoned government-owned property to provide housing for homeless people.

4) A revamping of the public schools in oppressed communities through a process of giving support to alternative schools within the public school system. The monolithic and failing public school system needs to be challenged internally to

liberate the creative energies of its best educators. This has worked in East Harlem, New York, under the guidance of Anthony Alvarado, who as Superintendent gave free reign to exceptional teachers to create their own innovative junior high schools within the existing school buildings and then allowed students and parents to choose which one they would attend. The results were excellent.

5) Access by all low-income students to individual tutoring and mentoring services available through the school or through community-based organizations.

6) A well-publicized guarantee of scholarship support for every low-income student whose academic success entitles him or her to go to college.

7) Institutionalization, in all colleges and graduate schools of education and social work, of courses focused on understanding oppression and adultism; on practices of leadership development, empowerment, and community organizing; on cultural and racial history and communication.

8) Establishment of a one-year Master's degree program at several universities focused on youthwork and management of community-based organizations. Emphasis in these programs should be on leadership development as the theme and purpose, with social services and education organized around this central thrust.

9) Extensive programs of cultural and community exchange, bringing young people together in community service programs, travel, and thoughtful exchange, internationally as well as nationally. Programs like the Children of War Tour, Experiment in International Living, Crossroads Africa, American Friends Service Committee, and others should be publicized, funded, and made broadly available. Local exchanges between communities should be fostered.

10) Extensive organization of team sports in every community, using the public schools' facilities, starting in third grade and up through high school, engaging all young people who want to participate in intracommunity and intercommunity tournaments.

11) A Community Hotline in every town or neighborhood which young people can call or visit if they want to discuss confidential problems. It should be outside of the school. A little booklet should be routinely distributed the first day of school, and at other entry points in churches and youth programs, starting when the children are seven years old. The booklet should invite people to use the Community Hotline if they have problems with family, friends, child abuse, drugs, alcohol, suicide, sex, phobias, over-eating, loneliness, or depression. The problems should be sensitively described, with pictures. Local media should publicize it. Counselors and therapists should be available to meet the demand.

12) All of the above programs should be implemented with significant youth involvement in the design, governance, systems of evaluation and accountability, staff selection, and long-range planning. This should be done both as leadership development for the youth, and as a method of insuring that the programs truly serve the needs and aspirations of the young people. This would, incidentally, help solve staffing problems long-term by insuring that many young people aspire to be youthworkers when they grow up.

In Conclusion:

The above recommendations, along with Treanor's, could be discussed, expanded, and budgeted by a gathering of national advocates, including young people. The results could be set forth as a document for future action by funders, advocates, and legislators. If we are to get beyond single-issue advocacy, we will need a substantial group to think and act toward an overall vision.

Most comprehensive community-based youth programs, operating in isolation and with autonomous planning, find themselves responding to local conditions by trying to create the above 12 program components, or some sub-set of them, independently, from scratch, filling the gaps left by our crumbling communities, schools, vocational schools, families, and employment system. This is another absurd situation.

Of course, if we must do it, as we have been, then increased funding for those of us so engaged is the first requirement. But perhaps we can, at the same time, work together to create a more rational situation.

In fact, many of the above objectives are already in the works, to one extent or another, on some advocate's or legislator's drawing board. But this is occurring as a piecemeal approach, oftentimes in funding competition with one another.

Even if in political practice we must proceed one item at a time, it would be better if a critical mass of advocates could agree on an overall set of goals that would serve as a vision toward which we would be moving.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dorothy Stoneman is the founder and director of the Youth Action Program (YAP) of the East Harlem Block Schools. YAP is a comprehensive youth program

best known for its youth involvement in governance and its program of youth employment in housing rehabilitation for the homeless. She has worked in Harlem and East Harlem for over 20 years, as community organizer, teacher, administrator, fundraiser, and agency director, working in public education, alternative education, day care, housing, drug rehabilitation, youth employment, and other forms of youth work.

Ms. Stoneman has an undergraduate degree from Harvard University and a Masters degree from Bank Street College of Education. Her husband, John Bell, is a folk musician and educator. They live with their three children, ages 25, 12, and a recently adopted 4-month-old.

A COMMENTARY

on William Treanor's

BARRIERS TO DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE YOUTH SERVICES

by David W. Richart

An Overview

Bill Treanor's article provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the past, current, and future state of our country's youth service programs almost twenty years after they were initiated. He colorfully raises some issues that are all-too-often ignored by professionals in the youth-serving field. But his article is more than just a finger-pointing exercise; it concludes with a series of problem-solving recommendations associated with the ever-increasing number of "at-risk" children and adolescents. As The Forgotten Half, the Grant Commission's interim report, suggests, these adolescents enter young adulthood facing a very different world than their college-bound peers. In this commentary, I comment on some broader implications of Treanor's paper.

The Larger Political Issue

More fundamentally, Treanor's paper raises the political question whether we, as a country, can formulate national policies directed at helping teenagers and young adults. Clearly, a major test for the next President and the governors will be the extent to which they address the problems identified in this paper. The author's solutions will encounter considerable financial, bureaucratic, and visceral opposition. One litmus test for our governors and the next President will be whether or not they lead the country to develop and fund a more constructive

youth policy for adolescents and young adults.

SOME AGREEMENTS IN PRINCIPLE

In this section, I re-emphasize and expound upon some observations which the author makes about past and current youth services programs. As a matter of record, I agree with the author's criticisms of the '70s youth services movement, including:

- (1) the inability of the youth services movement to develop a coherent philosophy and system of care. Perhaps, we were asking too much for a movement initiated on sweat equity, enthusiasm, good ideas, and the best of intentions to be able to develop comprehensive philosophy while expending most of its energies in providing services.
- (2) the tendency of youth service staff in recent years to become too "professional." The penalty exacted by this concession to professionalism was that the staff frequently may have distanced themselves from the children and youth they served. As a result, the programs became less innovative.
- (3) the unwillingness to develop a critical mass of public support for youth service programs in the event federal funding was reduced or eliminated. Because of program managers foresight, several programs flourished during the Reagan years. The majority, however, were, and are, in a constant fight for survival. Clearly, this is not easy for traditional programs that serve older adolescents, even harder for alternative programs, like the ones Treanor describes, to compete for ever-scarcer funds.

In addition to these observations, I think it is also fair to question the actual quality provided by youth services programs.

The Fascination with Deviance Theory

I also strongly agree with Treanor's deviance theory critique. In fact, advocates throughout the country warn of the dangers of labeling children in such tight, prescriptive categories and of government's increasing involvement in families' lives. Often this government intervention is punitive, and some advocates have coined the term "superinterventionism"¹ to describe it.

Categorical Funding and the Youth Problem of the Month

As Treanor's paper suggests, our present way of trying to "solve" the problems associated with adolescence and poverty is destined to failure. As a matter of public policy, the manner in which we respond to the problems of adolescents and young adults is not thoughtful and clear-minded. At least three factors, which the author describes, contribute to the current hodgepodge of unconnected, categorical funding of programs for teenagers and young adults:

- (1) the media's tendency to create "the crisis of the moment" by describing one critical problem, such as suicide, drug abuse, or missing children, without fully exploring for the public the complexity of the issue and the costs associated with its solutions. Sometimes an explanation of how to "solve" these complex problems does not conveniently fit into a five-inch newspaper sidebar;
- (2) our inclination to seek unplanned and simplistic solutions to complex problems. The urgency of these problems sometimes creates a tremendous pressure on political figures to respond immediately. Such kneejerk public policy responses often create erroneous and wasteful solutions. These problems were not created overnight, and we should not expect them to be solved overnight; and
- (3) our willingness to target selectively certain adolescent problems ex post facto without trying to create and fund broader, more comprehensive preventive or early intervention programs. Suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, eating disorders, and a series of other maladies often have similar roots. As Treanor indicates, comprehensive programs that address these root causes are more likely to succeed than other, after-the-fact responses.

To the author's list of three factors, I would add a fourth: the propensity of the public and political leaders to inject moralistic, sometimes punitive, personal philosophies into public policy. All too often, our public policies punish young adults because we see these children as "someone else's children." Seldom do we develop public policies empathetically, as if we were addressing the needs of our own adolescents.

The Current Skills and Talent Base of Staff

And yes, I agree, it's a national scandal that many incompetent people administer youth programs -- administration that requires multiple skills and expertise that many staff do not have. It should surprise no one that the quality of services is so low given the value that we place on the people who work with our children. The salaries we pay the people who work in our nation's youth services programs devalue youth as well as the staff that serve them. Treanor also correctly points out disparities in salaries between teachers and other youth workers.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON YOUTH SERVICES PROGRAMS IN THE '70S

Some Caveats

In addition to Treanor's comments, I provide other insights into the youth services programs developed in the 1970s. For fear of being criticized as a sentimentalist as well as a historical revisionist with a selective memory, I must first admit that these are my impressions of what occurred -- no empirical data supports the observations.

As the author suggests, the early '70s were dynamic and exciting times for youth services programs. Some refer to this period as the "alternative programs" movement. Most programs originated well outside the traditional mainstream social service system. These programs were vibrant, innovative, and controversial. However, many controversial approaches championed by the youth services movement in the '70s came under direct challenge by conventional human service providers. In the '80s, many of these same approaches, which had been so vilified by "the profession" in the '70s, have been adopted by the mainstream human services

community. In that sense, traditional human service agencies have become a bit more like the alternative programs of the 1970s.

A Unique Perspective on Adolescents

A unique philosophy formed the basis for youth services programs of the 1970s. The program staff were too young to have experienced the kind of amnesia about their own adolescence -- a condition which seems to afflict many other adults. Most staff had an understanding of how it felt to be an adolescent and sincere respect for the young people they tried to help. While it seems idealistic now, the program staff believed that by listening, showing compassion, and providing a minimum of structure, young people could make decisions for themselves which took into consideration their special needs.

More importantly, those who ran youth service programs had great faith and belief in the ability of young people to learn and grow from their experiences. Sometimes that meant letting young people make their own mistakes. As my later comments suggest, this fundamental philosophy largely has been discredited as irrelevant to the '80s.

One Movement Helps Foster Another

One significant result of the alternative programs movement occurred in the late 1970s when those involved in developing and operating youth service programs began to discuss larger political strategies. However, as Treanor points out, most directors of youth serving programs correctly felt that they might jeopardize their agency funding if they spoke out.

Fortunately, the originators of some state alternative programs spawned a second important initiative in the late '70s and early '80s -- the beginning of the

child advocacy movement. Simply put, program directors of youth services agencies played a leadership role in documenting the need for independent state organizations that could represent the political interests of children.

Since then, a number of state-based child advocacy organizations have been created. The rhetorical promise of the child advocacy movement has met with some notable successes as well as notorious failures. It is, and will continue to be, difficult to represent the interests of a constituency of children that does not have access to the traditional levers of political power.¹ Treanor identifies one troublesome dilemma for these child advocates when he explains how difficult it is simultaneously to call for more funding for children's programs while criticizing the current quality of service provided by public and private agencies.

While I appreciate Kentucky Youth Advocates' being mentioned as one of several risk-taking organizations, we are joined by other child advocacy organizations that remain the only independent voice for children in the states. In a political system dominated by the interests of the middle-aged and elderly, these organizations serve as a daily reminder of what society and government should be doing for "other people's children."

"He Who Accepts the King's Schilling Does the King's Bidding"

Despite the promise of non-traditional youth-serving programs, we now find that most innovative programs operate far differently than they were envisioned. Of necessity, these programs become "responsible" and "accountable" and an essential part of the human services community. By becoming more mainstream, the staff in the old youth services programs have adopted some attitudes and behaviors of other traditional human service programs. The evolution of these programs, and the staff who manage them, perhaps is inevitable. But, as these programs became

more financially dependent upon mainstream sources of support, their ability to remain flexible and responsive to young people's needs was reduced.

Treanor well documents four factors that allowed these programs to survive at the very time when there were major reductions in the federal funding of such programs. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the surviving alternative programs was in building a more diverse and independent financial support base for these programs.

THE '80S: RETRENCHMENT AND LEADERSHIP AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL-- ECONOMIC POLARIZATION AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR AT THE STATE LEVEL

The Leadership of Congress in Continuing Some Programs

It's worth emphasizing that, during the Reagan years, the Congress did continue funding under the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act and the Runaway Youth Act. While the Administration tried to emasculate these two federal programs, the Congress, in a display of statesmanship that ran against the political grain saw the efficacy of continuing some federal support to youth services programs during this pernicious tax-cutting period. Treanor is correct in suggesting, however, that much infrastructure that existed in the '70s was left on shaky grounds in the '80s.

Local Economies, Tax Bases, Foundations, and Corporations and Their Support of Youth Services Funding

Just as most major cities are increasingly divided into the haves and have nots, so too, our country is divided into areas of remarkable economic growth and other areas where economies are stagnant or in decline. Here, in middle America (Kentucky), we seem very far indeed from the vibrant, booming bi-coastal economies

in which tax bases support fairly substantial levels of human service funding. The three states with the highest growth in poverty rates during the '80s -- Iowa, West Virginia, and Kentucky -- have their own special economic infrastructive problems. As a result of declining or uneven economies in these and other middle American states, tax bases have stagnated or eroded. Simply put, many state and local governments do not have sufficient funds to adequately support quality human service programs with existing tax funds for the increasing number of poor children, adolescents, and young adults. Neither do their political leaders possess the will and leadership to raise taxes for this purpose.

The highly touted "private sector" is having its own problems. Local private sectors suffer from a bad case of "donor fatigue." Many local foundations are preoccupied with pursuing economic development and school reform issues. Other foundations provide one-time-only funds, only fund new projects, or focus on young children. Local corporations, are absorbed by national or multi-national firms, less interested in resolving community problems far distant from their corporate headquarters.

CONCLUSION: THE NEED FOR MORE FUNDAMENTAL REFORMS

For the future, our country's leaders and youth service programs should address several special groups. In this section, I highlight some systemic barriers that must be addressed before we change existing youth services programs.

Serving and Educating Immigrant Children

As a recent report² published by the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS) suggests, one emerging trend in education and youth service is the

problem of immigrant children:

"The great immigrant wave of the 1970s and 1980s has dramatically changed U.S. public schools. At the same time, the United States is increasingly becoming a multicultural and multilingual nation, transformed by its changing demographics, and in turn transforming those who come here."

We all hope that these children do not become the next population to receive the "deviant of the month" treatment by the media, the public, the politicians, and youth serving organizations. But it is important that the United States meaningfully address the special needs of these children and their parents. Our public schools and youth-serving agencies will need to develop dynamic and innovative approaches to help these children.

The Problem of Adolescents and Young Adults in Our Inner Cities

Our country does have an "inner city youth" problem in which a culture of desperation, hopelessness, and survival-of-the-fittest mentalities seem to dominate. Not only are these young people alienated from Middle America, they are foreign to us as well. The remarkable works of William Julius Wilson³ suggest that without dramatic macro-level approaches to changing our public policies, we are unlikely to help adolescents and young adults in a meaningful way. New federal programs will have to appeal to more than just poor black, white, and Hispanic youth -- they must secure a broad spectrum of political support if they are even to be adopted.

The Need for Real Jobs

Fundamental economic restructuring created a societal problem which far exceeds the focused solutions of those concerned with adolescents and young adults. Because of the economic structure of many cities, a job, or the hope of a job, seems almost a laughable goal for many young people. As our economy becomes

ever more connected to the international economy and requires an increasingly skilled workforce, opportunities for young people continue to narrow. Until the next President, the governors, or our nation's business leaders rebuild our country's economic base to provide real jobs with real fringe benefits and real opportunities for advancement, our young people will continue to constitute the majority of the underclass.

Our Willingness to Incorporate Punishment Themes in Our National Policies Toward Other People's Children

The American public has ambivalent feelings about how we as a society should treat other people's adolescents and young adults. For example, the youth services movement of the '70s was based on the currency of compassion -- an understanding that these programs acting in loco parentis should listen to and support adolescents through difficult period of their lives. However, the tenor of the times is different now. Clearly, current national youth policy assumes that other people's adolescents need to be constantly protected and that their lives should be totally structured and controlled. If adolescents do not comply with our prescription for them, our public policies and practices dictate that they should be punished.

This battle for the hearts, minds, and bodies of America's youth is not a new dilemma -- it has been the subject of our national debate since the invention of the Republic. Kenneth Kenniston⁴ of the Carnegie Council on Children raised the question as to whether we indeed like and respect "other people's children."

In a seminal document on this same subject, W. Morton Grubb and Marvin Lazerson⁵ argue that Americans lack a sense of "public love for children." We, as a country, "are unwilling to make public commitments to them except when we believe the commitments will pay off." We are, in other words, a nation that believes in children as end-products -- as investment vehicles. We do not value children on

their own merits -- as valuable persons in their own right. Until we redirect our current public policies to build upon the considerable strengths of adolescents because we believe in their development as people, we will not make any real progress.

A Final Note

Before we can follow the prescription outlined in Treanor's recommendations, we must address fundamental changes in our attitudes and policies. Unless we do, recommendations suggested by Treanor will have only incremental effects on our adolescents and young people.

In the case of youth policy, the public may be ahead of our political leaders. I sense, in our country, a feeling that something dramatic, comprehensive, and yes, expensive should be done to address the concerns of the adolescent and young adult population. Whether because of fear or compassion, the American public may be more responsible for setting the national agenda than our politicians are. Creating a network of innovative youth services programs is one of the country's most important missions. If the American public possesses the will to comprehensively fund such a network, the needs of the nation's most ignored, most challenging, and most promising groups -- the adolescents and young people of our country -- can be met.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

David W. Richart has served as one of the founders and Executive Director of Kentucky Youth Advocates (KYA) since November 1977. Kentucky Youth Advocates is Kentucky's only private non-profit public interest group dedicated to assuring that governmental human service agencies and public schools carry out their statutory responsibilities on behalf of powerless children.

During the last ten years, Mr. Richart has authored more than 75 public policy reports on the status of Kentucky's children. He has been appointed by the Governor or the General Assembly to state study groups that examined major public policy issues related to children and their families. Most recently, Mr. Richart served on "Kentucky Tomorrow: The Commission on Kentucky's Future."

Prior to assuming his present position, Mr. Richart served as the juvenile justice specialist for the Kentucky Crime Commission, with an interagency planning agency, as a juvenile probation and parole officer, in a state diagnostic institution for delinquents.

Mr. Richart holds masters degrees from the University of Louisville and Western Kentucky University. He received his bachelors degree from Moravian College.

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Publications of

YOUTH AND AMERICA'S FUTURE:

THE WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION COMMISSION ON WORK, FAMILY AND CITIZENSHIP

The Grant Commission issued its Interim Report, **The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America**, on January 20, 1988. The Commission's Final Report is **The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America's Youth and Young Families**. Single copies will be available without charge in November 1988.

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American Youth: A Statistical Snapshot by James Wetzel

Drawing on the latest statistically reliable government surveys, this demographic review captures much of the diversity inherent in a collective portrait of American 15-24 year-olds. Includes data on marriage, childbearing, living arrangements, income, education, employment, health, and juvenile justice. Historical trends as well as future projections are presented along with 12 charts, 18 tables.

Current Federal Policies and Programs for Youth by J.R. Reingold and Associates

Who is doing what for youth in the federal government? This concise survey of current federal policies and programs for youth in Education, Health and Human Services, Labor, Justice, and Defense provides a one-of-a-kind resource for researchers, practitioners, analysts, and policymakers who want quick access to accurate information about federal youth policy. Includes state-level allocation tables.

Youth Policies and Practices in Selected Countries by Rosemary George

Presents the salient features of the post-compulsory education and training policies of 11 foreign countries designed to smooth the transition of non-college-bound youth into the workplace. The countries are: Australia, Britain, Canada, Finland, France, West Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Norway, and Sweden. Includes tables.

Facts and Faith: A Status Report on Youth Service by Anne C. Lewis. **Commentary** by Jane Kendall

Clarifies the underlying assumptions and reviews the current state of knowledge about youth service programs, including barriers and supports for such programs. The overriding challenge of youth service is to combine the dual needs that youth have: to work and to serve. Citing dozens of local, state, and national youth service programs, this analysis is a vital resource for policymakers and community leaders. Commentary stresses the value of service-learning.

- Copies of these four **Information Papers** are available for \$5.00 each postpaid from: **William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Youth and America's Future**, Suite 301, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036-5541.
- The following **Working Papers** were prepared for the Commission's deliberations by a variety of scholars and practitioners. They are available from the Commission at \$10.00 each postpaid.

Youth Transition from Adolescence to the World of Work by Garth L. Mangum. **Commentaries** by Marvin Lazerson and Stephen F. Hamilton.

Summarizes labor market realities, employer expectations, parental influences, and the difficulties youth experience as they move into the world of work. Highlights vocational education, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training opportunities available for youth. Makes recommendations for how families, schools, and workplaces can aid youth in the transition to work.

Youth and the Workplace: Second-Chance Programs and the Hard-to-Serve by Thomas J. Smith, Gary C. Walker, Rachel A. Baker, (Public/Private Ventures). **Commentaries** by Gary Burtless, Jacqueline P. Danzberger, Morton H. Sklar, Richard F. Elmore.

Second-chance education, training, and employment programs of the last decade are detailed. Includes tables and an appendix of model programs for at-risk youth. Four commentaries expand the research and policy recommendations.

Who Will Train and Educate Tomorrow's Workers? The Financing of Non-College-Bound Young Workers' Recurrent Education by Robert Sheets, Andrew Hahn, Robert Lerman and Erik Butler.

Advocates the need for universal recurrent education and discusses practical ways of achieving expanded post-secondary opportunities for non-college youth, the major losers in today's labor market. Describes public, private, and cooperative strategies that can begin to close the gap between education and work.

Youth and Work: What We Know, What We Don't Know, What We Need to Know by Ivan Charner and Bryna Shore Fraser (National Institute for Work and Learning). **Commentaries** by Sue E. Berryman and Hayes Mizell.

A comprehensive analysis of research on the educational, occupational, and personal benefits youth accrue through work. Examines work patterns of demographic subgroups, roles and responsibilities of youth workers, reasons for and attitudes toward participation in work, and actual work experiences.

The Bridge: Cooperative Education for All High School Students by Cynthia Parsons. **Commentaries** by Dennis Gray and David Lynn, Morgan V. Lewis, Roy L. Wooldridge.

Calling for a fundamental change in American high schools, the founder of a successful Vermont community service program presents a rationale and methodology for experiential and cooperative education models. Underscores the benefits of combining learning and doing in a school-based, supervised setting.

What Does the Independent Sector Do for 16-24 Year-Olds? by Miriam M. Wood. **Commentaries** by Virginia Hodgkinson and Leonard W. Stern.

Identifies, quantifies, and analyzes the role of independent sector agencies and organizations serving 16-24 year-olds. Interprets factors, including funding and organizational barriers, that affect the vitality of human service agencies.

The Interaction of Family, Community, and Work in the Socialization of Youth by Stephen F. Hamilton. **Commentaries** by John Ogbu and Paul Riesman.

Explores the critical connections among family, community, and the workplace as they interact with young people. Calls for establishing intentional policy among these three spheres of influence to bolster their separate, but interconnected roles in socializing youth.

The Difference that Differences Make: Adolescent Diversity and Its Deregulation by Melvin D. Levine, M.D. **Commentaries** by Michael S. Wald and John H. Martin.

Discusses how teaching methods and expectations can constrict the ways in which young people learn, denying many access to education and employment opportunities. Contends that predetermined memory, verbal, and written criteria—to which a large number of students cannot and do not respond well—are often the only vehicles for showing knowledge. Argues for a wider lens through which to view young people and their abilities.

Transitional Difficulties of Out-of-Home Youth by Joy Duva and Gordon Raley. **Commentaries** by Eileen M. Pasztor and Peter R. Correia III and Anita Fream.

A targeted look at a vulnerable part of the youth population—foster care youth and runaways—who they are, how many they are, what programs serve them, what special problems they encounter in their transition to adulthood, what more needs to be done. Examines independent living programs that assist older out-of-home youth in preparing for life and work.

The Transition to Adulthood of Youth with Disabilities by David Vandergoot, Amy Gottlieb, and Edwin W. Martin. **Commentaries** by Sharon Stewart Johnson and Diane Lipton and Mary Lou Breslin.

Cites youth with disabilities as an economically disadvantaged subgroup and explores family support, education, and employment issues as well as the barriers to community participation and self-sufficiency particular to these youth. Includes extensive research findings and policy recommendations.

Mutuality in Parent-Adolescent Relationships by James Yountiss. **Commentaries** by Ann C. Crouter and John H. Lewko.

Through a comprehensive review of recent research, counters popular mythology that adolescent relationships with parents and peers are negative. Provides a context for adolescent-parent and adolescent-peer relationships to guide program development and policy considerations.

Communities and Adolescents: An Exploration of Reciprocal Supports by Joan Wynn, Harold Richman, Robert A. Rubenstein, and Julia Littell, with Brian Britt and Carol Yoken. **Commentaries** by Diane P. Hedin and Judith B. Erickson.

What can communities do to be more responsive to youth and what can communities expect from youth? Explores the rich variety of community supports that can be made available to adolescents if individual communities decide to make youth a priority. Appendix includes 22 selected studies describing the differing impacts of community supports on adolescents.

Determinants of Youth's Successful Entry into Adulthood by Sarah Gideonse. **Commentaries** by Elijah Anderson and David F. Ricks.

What prevents youth from successful entry into adulthood: individual defects or environment flaws? Addresses the factors which account for the difficulties youth have in assuming adult roles. Examines characteristics and circumstances that promote positive changes in young people and explains why it is never too late for interventions—even for youth with multiple problems.

Family Influences on Transitions to the Adult Job Market by Robert I. Lerman and Theodora Ooms. **Commentaries** by Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr. and Margaret Simms.

Analyzes the often ignored interrelationship of family influences and youth employment decisions. Emphasizes the critical connections among youth's living arrangements, the responsibilities of young people, and their choices about work.

Barriers to Developing Comprehensive and Effective Youth Services by William Treanor. **Commentaries** by David Richart and Dorothy Stoneman.

A provocative discussion of the youth service world: prevailing attitudes toward youth, history, funding dilemmas, and leadership and staffing scenarios. Recommends a prototype for youth service systems.